

1606/125.

A  
CONTRITE  
AND  
HUMBLE  
H E A R T,  
WITH  
MOTIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS TO  
PREPARE IT.

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*A contrite and humble Heart, O God  
thou wilt not despise.* PSALM. 50.

*Prepare your hearts to God, and serve  
him only.* 1 SAM. 7.

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THE SEVENTH EDITION, APPROVED.

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TO THE  
READER.

**T**HE subject which I treat of is the best of Hearts; a contrite and an humble one. A Heart which is the price of Heaven. An inestimable jewel, which deserves our selling all we have to purchase it. What disadvantage it may have suffered in my hand, who have prepared and fashioned it according to my fancy, I pretend not to excuse. As rough, and as unpolished as it is, the jewel is entire; the interior value of it is the same within itself, and that is abundantly sufficient to atone for all. Besides, contrition and humility affect not the advantage of a modish outside; plain sincerity becomes them infinitely more. An humble penitent, who has an angry God to please, and tremble under his Almighty hand, has something else to think of. When a Magdalene once comes with penitential tears, to bathe her Saviour's feet, she quite forgets her looking-glass, and comes without consulting

ing it. She brings her precious ointments with her ; but these are only for her Lord : they are not either to adorn herself, or please the company.

The method I have followed, may, perhaps, seem arbitrary, and require a line or two to justify it. I begin with the love of God. 1. Because it is the first, the greatest, and indeed the whole duty of man. 2. Because altho' the practice of repentance commonly begins with fear, goes on with hope, and ends in love ; yet, where our practice ends, our theory begins ; and what is last performed, is generally first designed, and principally aimed at. 3. Because there is no ground for either hope or fear, before we know our duty. When we know it, and consider well how little we observe it, then it is that we begin to tremble at the thought of our appearance at the bar : the terror of a living God awakens us, and makes us sensible, how fearful a thing it is to fall into his hands. For this reason, in the second place, I shew the general motives of our fear : which, to prevent despair,

*Heb. x. 13.*

despair, I counterbalance with the motives of our hope: and, after all because presumption is the greater danger of the two, (our pride inclining us to think repentance easy, and our self-love daily tempting to defer it,) therefore I have taken care to shew the danger of delay. These preparations I thought proper for a contrite and humble heart.

When I describe contrition, I enlarge much more upon the resolutions of amendment, than the sorrow due to sin; because these resolutions are commonly the more neglected of the two. A little melancholy, or a little tenderness of nature, with no more than merely self-love in the case, may oftentimes produce a sensible concern, and even tears, when we reflect upon the danger we are in: though all this while our darling humours, our beloved sins, are every jot as dear to us as ever. Some slight thoughts we have, in general, of doing so no more; but these are only superficial: they produce not a sincere and hearty detestation of our crimes: they are to God, what our compliments are to our neighbours; these

these are words of course, and those are thoughts of course ; both signify just nothing.

These two sections of contrition

\* 91. \* have been printed apart,  
by one who signed the  
*Intro* paper as his act and deed ;  
*Part. 1.* inviting others to take pen  
*Ch. xxi* in hand, and do the same.

I sign it not with my hand,  
but only with my Reader and myself  
may sign it with our hearts.

In the first four sections of humility,  
I offer little or nothing of my own. It  
would not have become me, to pretend  
much acquaintance with so rare a vir-  
tue. And besides, in such a matter,  
so extremely disagreeable to our cor-  
rupted nature, there was need of more  
authority than mine.

I conclude with the character of a  
good christian. Having described his  
heart, I thought it would not be amiss  
to finish the remainder of his character.  
In this, also, I advance not a word of  
my own. Should I presume to draw a  
christian to the life, it would be as  
great a vanity, as if my reader should  
pretend to sit for the picture. I pro-  
duce

duce the scripture chiefly, and the fathers, now and then a modern author : any helping hand was welcome in so difficult a piece.

No matter who I am, I am a son of the church ; and submit myself entirely to her. † My  
† S. Pacin, name is CHRISTIAN,  
B. of Barce- and my surname CATHO-  
lone. LIC ; the rest I have leave  
to conceal. God's honor,  
and my neighbour's good, is all I aim  
at : and, as to either of these designs,  
I have no other name, but what is  
altogether useless.





## ADVERTISEMENT.

**I**N this edition, I have altered nothing but the last section of humility, in which I have omitted three articles. I was advised to it by a friend; and would not argue the matter with a person whom I have so much reason to think wiser than myself. As to my own judgment, I am still of a contrary opinion; and should not have so easily submitted, had I not reflected that I ought to practice the humility I preach.



MOTIVES  
OF  
LOVE.

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SECT. I.

*How much it imports us to love God  
above all things.*

WHEN the Pharisee asked our Saviour, *Mat. xxii. 36. What is the great commandment in the law?* Our dear Redeemer, who came to perfect the old law; who came to change the law of fear into a law of love, who brought down fire from Heaven, to inflame our hearts replied, *v. 37, 38, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind. This is the great commandment.*

I fear that many of us little think how great it is. We little reflect on the one side, how great our obligations

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are to love our God; and on the other side, how great are the advantages which cannot fail to attend this love. We will consider, how great our ingratitude is, if we omit our greatest duty; how great our folly is, if we neglect our greatest good.

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## S E C T. II.

*That the love of God, is our greatest Duty.*

**T**O make it plainly appear, that the love of God above all things, is the greatest duty of a christian; one would think it were enough to shew, that it is a duty which comprises all our other duties; that it is the total sum of christianity; and that without the least hyperbole, it is the whole duty of man; because, all other precepts whatsoever, are only so many branches of this great commandment, which is the root of all the rest. St. Cyprian *Serm. de Orat. an* calls it the grand epitome of all our obligations. And were it necessary, it were easy to demonstrate, that as God is therefore infinitely perfecter



fecter than all his creatures, because he really contains in his own essence all perfections whatsoever ; so our obligation to love him is incomparably greater than all other obligations, because it eminently comprehends them altogether.

This is enough to give us a confused idea of our duty at a distance. If we draw the prospect nigher, we shall find an infinite variety of pressing motives which enforce our obligation. Every single excellency of the object we adore is all divine : no shadow there of any blemish to obscure those charms which challenge our affection : nothing in our God, but what is infinitely amiable, and deserving infinitely more than all the love that we are able to return. Since therefore all and every one of his innumerable excellencies are unlimited and boundless ; since they all and every one deserve a suitable esteem, since they command our love as they deserve it ; hence it follows clearly, that our duty is as boundless as their merit ; and that as St. Bernard says. *There is no other measure of our love, than loving without measure.*

Amongst the numberless variety of  
those

*hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of any man,* 1 Cor. ii. 9. There is one which we are more acquainted with ; there is one which in a manner makes the rest our own ; and which of all, is the most apt to make a sensible impression in a generous heart ; I mean, that of a true friend. We read, in *Ecclesiasticus*, vi. 15. that there is nothing comparable to a true and faithful friend : and that in the balance of the wise, he weighs much more than all the gold and silver in the world. As there is nothing better upon earth than a true friend, so there is nothing more pretended to.— And as the world deceives us most, where we expect it least, so there is hardly any thing in which it more deceives us, than in this. Of all that read these lines, perhaps there is not one, who has not been already very much mistaken in a friend : and it is no wonder, if we always are so till we raise our hearts above this world, and fix them there, where we are sure to find a true and faithful one ; who loves us gratis, always loved us ; loved us even when we were his enemies ; and will

will for all eternity, continue the same love, unless we prove ungrateful, and refuse to love him above all things, as he very well deserves.

He loves us gratis ; not for any good he gains by it, or any little service we can do him. He cannot stand in need of any of those goods, which every moment he bestows upon us. *Thou art my God*, says the Psalmist, *Psal. xvi. 2. My goodness extends not to thee.* When we have done all we can, *Luke xvii. 10. We are unprofitable servants* : we have done ourselves the greatest good we can imagine ; but our God is not a jot better for it. The fountain, says St. Austin, is not better for our drinking at the stream, nor the sun the better for our walking by his light. If I may use St. Paul's expression, *2 Cor. xii. 14. He seeks not what is ours, but us.* He seeks for nothing but our love, and even this command he lays upon us, merely for our good, *Deut. x. 12. 13. And now*, says he, *what does the Lord thy God require of thee ? but to love him with all thy heart, which I command thee this day for thy good.* Behold, dear Christians,  
a true

Lib. x.  
de Civ.



a true and faithful friend? and see how you can answer it to your good nature, if you do not love him.

He always loved us, always thought of us; not only all of us in general, but every one of us; and loved us with a love eternal as himself. He says in the prophet Jeremy, ch. xiii. 3. *I have loved thee with an eternal love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.* And what more powerful attractive can there be, to draw us to him, than that loving kindness? which from all eternity took care of our concerns, contrived our future happiness, and drew a scheme of all the necessary means to bring us to it. Except himself, he hardly thought of any thing but us: our first creation, our redemption, our salvation, were always in his eye; they were the eternal entertainments of his mind; they were the great design which gave occasion to the first production of this world, which we ungratefully prefer before him, though he made it for us, Eccl. ix. 14. *Never forsake your old friend, your new one will never be like him.* Alas! who who can help it, if we will be so ungrateful,



grateful, and forsake so ancient a friend? We may be sure it is impossible to find a new one, comparable to him.

He loved us, even when we were his enemies. 'Tis true, the first production of the universe was proof enough; and no man can deny, but that so great a gift bestowed upon us for our use abundantly sets forth the greatness of his love. But yet the whole creation of the world, is nothing to the constant conservation of it for our sakes, who have so long, so much abused it. If the first bestowing of a more than ordinary favour, without any previous merit on our side, be such an argument of more than ordinary love, what is the constant repetition and continuation of the same so long a time; although the longer we enjoy it, we demerit more and more, and are as obstinate in our ingratitude, as he is constant in his kindness? Was there ever any true and hearty love like this? St. Paul expresses some resemblance of it in a second letter, which he writes to the Corinthians, and declares his readiness to serve them, 1 Cor. xii. 15. *Though (says he) the*  
*more*

*more abundantly I love you, the less I am lov'd.* We read it in the 12th chapter which relates his rapture into the third Heaven: and without all doubt, this love of his was copied there from the divine original. If one small spark of this celestial love had such a wonderful effect in the apostles breast: what can we say or think of that immense and boundless fire of everlasting love, which no ingratitude of man was ever able to extinguish! though our God foresaw how much it was in vain to court our love, although he was not ignorant that his affection for so base, and so unworthy creatures, would be more despised, the more he laboured to endear us to him; though he knew beforehand, the unparalleled ingratitude of men: nevertheless, he sent his only Son to save us; he could not hold his hand; he could not deny himself the satisfaction of being infinitely kind. *Be astonished, O ye Heavens at this!* Jer. ii. 12.

St. John discoursing of this love, takes notice of no other motive of it than our gratitude; our indispensable obligation to be grateful to so good a friend.

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*We love him, says he, because he first loved us,* 1 Jo. iv. 19. He does not say because he is infinitely good and kind us. His reason I gather from the 12th ver. of the same chapter, where he says, *No man has seen God at any time,* and the 20, where he adds, *How can a man love God whom he has not seen?* If we had ever seen him *face to face,* 1 Cor. xiii. 12. as all the blessed spirits do in Heaven, we should then have loved him here as they do there: the very sight of him (although he had never been kind) would have transported us beyond all thoughts of any thing but him; it would have been impossible to entertain the least impression of any other love in competition with him. But, because this happiness is not to be expected here, where it is impossible to *see him as he is,* 1 Joh. iii. 2. Therefore St. John the Disciple whom Jesus loved, Jo. xxi. v. 7. who by experience knew, that no impression sinks deeper in a generous heart, than the endearing obligation of returning love for love, pleads nothing else but gratitude, for the fulfilling of this great commandment: *We love him, says he, because he first loved us,* 1 John iv 19.

There

There is nothing more obliging, than the love of a true friend; and nothing else obliges us without it. Whatsoever the interior value of a benefit amounts to, when we cast it up, the obligation is not taxed by any other weight or measure, than his love to whom we stand indebted for it. In this case, ingratitude, of all crimes, is the most unpardonable, a crime so base, which human nature so abhors; that even the worst of men, who are ashamed of nothing else, can never endure, that any man should either say or think, they are ungrateful. Other sins, they publish to the world, but this they always labour to conceal. And tho' I scarce can think of any wickedness so infamous, but some have been so wicked as to glory in it; yet ingratitude is so unworthy, carries so much baseness in the very front of it, that I could never hear of any that were ever proud of being thought ungrateful. Rather than a man should think they are so, they invent a thousand frivolous pretences to disown the obligation; they quarrel with the benefit; revile the benefactor; and that they  
may

may deny a less ingratitude, they hide it with a greater. So ashamed they are to own this fault, that they had rather be a thousand times ungrateful, than be once esteemed so.

This is the crime which many of us are so guilty of, although we are as much unwilling to believe it, as we are in a manner quite insensible of being so. Because our God is infinitely more our friend than any other can be, therefore we regard him infinitely less. We cannot, without indignation, observe one man ungrateful to another: the very story of an ungrateful action, says Seneca, puts us out of all patience, and gives us a loathing for the author of it. That inhuman villain, we cry, to do so horrid a thing! And yet, when we observe, how horribly ungrateful a poor miserable creature is to our Creator, we take little notice of it; we regard it with a cold indifference, as if we were content it should be so.

We cannot plead in our defence, that we are ignorant, how much we stand indebted to him for his love:—alas! we all know well enough, that there was never any love like his:  
so



so true, so ancient, and so constant. If we plead forgetfulness or inadvertency, it will only make the matter worse, by offering to mend it. He is the most ungrateful of all, says the moral philosopher, who forgets either the benefactor or the benefit. And yet, when we have made the best we can of an ill cause, 'tis certain, that the true, if not the only reason, why we are insensible of our ingratitude, is, because we seldom call to mind, and almost quite forget, how great our *obligation is to love our GOD, because he first loved us*, I John iv. 19.

*All the ends of the world*, says the Psalmist, *shall remember, and be converted to God*, Psal. xxii. 28. Let us remember only what a friend God is; how infinitely better than the best we have besides: let us remember only this, and we shall be converted: we shall be ashamed of our ingratitude and love him above all things.



S E C T. III.

*That the Love of God is our greatest Good.*

**W**Hatever our duty is, the very word commandment is always odious to those who love their liberty, and makes it so much harder to go down with them. But yet, if after second thoughts upon the matter, we discover that one reason, why it is our greatest obligation, is, because it is our greatest good; the *yoke* will then seem *easy*, and the *burden light*, Mat. xi. 30.

Three things there are, which gain our hearts, command our inclinations, and in a manner, govern all our actions; and these three things are, honour, profit, and pleasure. Whatsoever we call good, falls under one of these three heads; 'tis either honourable, profitable, or delightful. All these three accompany the love of God, and none of them are ever to be found without it.

1. To begin with honour: I take for granted, no man ought to judge, that this or that is honourable, because  
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the generality of mankind, by mistake, is apt to value and admire it; but before he gives his verdict, every man should should first consider well the merits of the cause. A wise man, though he lived amongst a multitude of infidels, and saw how much they honour and adore false Gods, he would not therefore presently conclude such idols honourable—but would rather laugh at those who are so blind, as not to see how little they deserve it. The question is not, what we (by a vulgar error) are inclined to honour most, but, what it is that is most worthy of it; and this upon a strict enquiry, will appear to be the love of God; honour at all hands, is agreed to be a testimony of some excellence; and nothing can be truly honourable, if it be not truly excellent. A man has no just title to his honour (any more than what the common duties of civility amount to,) if he have not something in him more than ordinary, some perfection to distinguish him, and raise him to a height more elevated than the lowest rank of men.

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The qualities which justly challenge men's esteem, are wisdom, justice, power, and whatsoever raises us to the perfection of our nature. As for wisdom, S. Thomas of Aquine 2. 2. q. 47. has demonstrated, that no man can be truly wise, who does not love God above all things. He may be, says he, a wise merchant, or a wise pilot, a wise statesman, or a wise general; because he may be prudent in the choice of proper means, well fitted to the purpose and design of such employments; but it is impossible, to be a wise man, without being wise in order to the proper end of man, the great design of his creation, which is nothing but the knowledge and the love of God. A magistrate, who is created merely for the public peace, whatever he may be in other things, if he be not wise in order to that end, he is not a wise magistrate. And since all mankind was created to be happy in an everlasting union with God, whatever a person may be in other affairs, if he be not wise in order to this end, he may be a wise  
what

what you please, but he is not a wise man.

As for justice, I would gladly know how any man is thoroughly and truly just, who is perpetually guilty of the most notorious injustice we can think of. Such is the man, whoever he be, that does not love his Maker as he ought. 'Tis true; he only is unjust to God; he only wrongs himself; he never wronged his neighbour, may be all his life. But what could you say of a steward who only cheats his master? Would you think him a just man, because he never cheats his fellow-servants?

As for power: I confess it may be great, in some-particular respects, but never can be absolute, without the love of God. I may say the same of power, that St. Thomas says of wisdom. A man without this love may be a powerful prince, a powerful warrior, or the like; because, without it he may have all power necessary for the main design of government, or war, &c. But since without this love, he neither can command his passions, nor himself, it is evident he has not all  
the

the power necessary to attain the proper end of man's creation. In a word, he is no powerful man, who is not master of himself.

Thus you may plainly see, how these three characters of wise, just, powerful, which are the most esteemed and honoured in the world, are only shadows, and imperfect semblances, if separated from the love of God. You plainly see, that it not only is the greatest excellence of man, most honourable, most deserving our esteem; but that, without it, there is hardly any thing which truly is so.

2. As it is our greatest honour, so it is our greatest profit. St. Paul was so sensible of this, that though the fervour of his zeal appears in all his writings, yet he never speaks with greater emphasis, than when he has a fair occasion to discourse upon this subject. *Though I speak,* says he, *with the tongues of men, and angels, and have not charity, I am become like sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and tho' I have all faith, so that I could remove*



mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profits me nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. He has reckoned up the greatest gifts, and best advantages that he could call to mind, and yet he says they all are nothing to our purpose, without love. On the other side, the same apostle teaches us, that all things else are profitable with it, though they never can be so without it. *We know*, says he, *that all things work together for good, to those who love God*, Rom. viii. 28. The secret of changing all things into gold, has in vain long time been sought for; but the mystery of changing all meanness of our actions into more than gold, is much more easy to be found. *Whatever ye do*, says St. Paul, *do all to the glory of God*, 1. Cor. x. 31. and every thing you will do, will have more value in his sight, than all the gold and silver in the world. The least degree of love, the coldest act of charity, even the giving a cup of cold water, for the love of God, our Saviour tells us, *shall in no wise lose*



*lose its reward*, Matt. x. 42. So true is that of St. Austin, all things else are profitable with it; nothing else is truly so without it.

3. As it is our greatest profit, so it is our greatest pleasure: there is nothing so delightful, even in this world, as to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind. It is hard enough, I know, to make the world believe it; because, although the truth be in itself, as clear and bright as the meridian sun, our passions raise a cloudy mist before our eyes, which intercepts the sight of it. All persons whose affections are fixed upon the pleasures of this world, can hardly ever be persuaded, but that the love of God is the dullest, and the most insipid thing imaginable. They easily conceive, that nothing is so honourable as to be a saint; and that it is but a very little profit for a man, *to gain the world, and lose his soul*, Matt. xvi. 26. The honour and the profit are agreed upon, but where is the pleasure? All that can be said upon this subject, they are acquainted with, they understand it not. He preaches in an unknown tongue, who  
preaches

preaches the love of God to those who never loved him. The language of love, says St. Bernard, is barbarous to those, who love not.

As soon as ever they begin to turn their back upon these rotten pleasures, and look towards heaven; presently these darlings of their heart begin, as it were to pull them by the sleeve, (as St. Austin *Conf. lib. 8.* words it,) and whisper in their ear, do you forsake us? And from this moment shall we have your company no more for ever? Shall we never see you more? Thus they solicit, thus they importune, and tempt them, to defer the time of their conversion. Do you think it possible to live without the pleasures of this world? Ah Christians! it is not impossible; it is the greatest pleasure in the world to live without them. It is true, the very thoughts of separation are like the thoughts of death: but then we ought to reflect, that as we feel no pain when we are dead, but all our pain is only whilst we are dying: so we feel the pain of leaving worldly pleasures, whilst we are deliberating what to do; but

but we are dead, we feel no pain at all, when once we are resolved upon it.—*You are dead*, says St. Paul to the Colossians, Col. iii. 3. *and your life is hidden with Christ in God.* I am dead, says the same apostle to the Galatians, Gal. ii. 19, 20. *and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me.* See the powerful effects of love ! It makes us as insensible to all the pleasures of this world, as if our inclinations were already dead, and quite extinguished in us. Cant. viii. 6. *Love is as strong as death.*

It is this victorious love which frees us from the tyranny of all those passions which divide the kingdom of our heart : a kingdom *brought to desolation ; where Satan casts out Satan ; and how can this kingdom stand ?* Matt. xii. 25, 26. How is there any true content and satisfaction to be found in it ? A man who places all his happiness in humouring his passions, can never please himself, till he has pleased them all : and since it is impossible to please two masters, how is it possible for any man to please so many ? I might here appeal to each  
man's

man's private conscience, for a farther testimony of this truth : but, if a fullen conscience (even when it is upon the wreck) refuses to confess, we have the word of God, the best and clearest evidence we can desire : *The wicked,* says he, Isa. lvii. 20, 21. *are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest ; whose waters cast up mire and dirt : there is no peace says my God, to the wicked.*

On the other side, when once the love of God has full possession of our heart, when Christ governs it by faith, and the holy Ghost by charity ; when the spirit of God begins to *move upon the face of the waters*, Gen. i. 2. it presently *commands the winds and the sea*, Matt. viii. 26. and there succeeds a great calm. In a word, as much as liberty is more agreeable than slavery, as much as unity is better than division, as much as peace, content, and ease, are more delightful than perpetual disturbance, discontent, and pain, so much the pleasure which attends the love of God, is greater than the pleasures of this world.

Had it been possible for our Creator to oblige us all to love him gratis, we might  
might

might then have had more colour for our crime. And yet it would have been no more than what he very well deserves. He loved us gratis, without any possibility of recompence: he humbled himself to repair our honour—he quitted Heaven to promote our interest—he suffered torments to procure our ease—and it would only be a suitable return, if we preferred his honour, interest and pleasure, far before our own. But, as our kind and gracious God has ordered it to our advantage, we are all obliged to seek our own true honour, interest, and pleasure, and despise the false appearance of honourable, profitable and delightful which the world endeavours to delude us with.

When we have made the most we can of such an obligation, it will amount to neither more nor less than what we daily see before our eyes. Consider how the ambitious, the covetous, the voluptuous, love their honours, riches, pleasures: is it not plain, they love them above all things? And why should not we love God as well as worldlings love the world? They  
love



love it with all their heart, they desire nothing else, but to enjoy it; with all their soul, they have no passion for any thing else; with all their mind, they think of nothing else, but how to make a figure in it. Has God less charms than the world? Or is a flattering friend (well known to be our greatest enemy,) more amiable than the best of friends, most true, most ancient, and most constant, who has always loved us better than we love ourselves? Is it a greater honour for a man to be the devil's slave, than to be a favourite of God? Is it a greater profit to be cheated in the end, than be eternally rewarded? Or, are those pleasures, which are unchangeable, immortal and divine; which even in this vale of misery, begin our heaven upon earth? Ah Christians! we have little reason to dispute the terms of such an obligation, where the whole advantage is entirely on our side: so great advantage, that we cannot truly love ourselves, unless we *love our Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind*, Matt. xxii. 38. This is not only our greatest duty, but our greatest good.

## S E C T. IV.

*That the love of God is the chief grace  
of the Holy Ghost.*

**I** Am come, says our Saviour, to send fire on the earth, Luke xii. 22. and what do I desire, but that it may be kindled? This he desires; for this he came, and this we pray for, in the service of the church: come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of thy love.

The Holy Ghost came visibly at first and proved his presence by the miracles he did. But yet a spirit is not naturally sensible; and when he comes invisibly, he comes more like himself; nor have we any reason (when he dwells within us) to suspect, that he is less at home, because he less appears abroad. Although we do not see the fire descend, and rest upon our heads; yet, if the love of God inflames us, if it burn within our hearts, if it appear in our devotion, in our conversation, in our actions, it is enough, we then may hope we have received the Holy Ghost, and that our Saviour verifies in us his promise, which he made us, when he said, *he shall*

*shall he in you, John xiv. 17. He did not come into the world to visit the apostles only, and abandon their posterity: our Saviour did not send him to us; that he might immediately forsake us, but that he might remain with us for ever to the end of the world. I will pray my Father, says he, that he may abide with you for ever, John xiv. 16.*

The spirit of God shall be in us. It is a solemn promise of our Saviour himself; we cannot doubt of it, although we cannot but admire it with profound astonishment, like that of Solomon, *will God dwell with us on the earth, 1 Kings iii. 8. 27.* Will the Spirit of God not only dwell here with us, but within us? *If heaven, says he, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have builded?* If we find, that Solomon was thus transported when he looked upon his temple and compared it with the Majesty of God, to whom he built it; may not we admire much more the living temple of the Holy Ghost? If the heaven of heavens cannot contain the spirit of God, how much less this little house of clay? Can we imagine that this little heart

of ours, is more capacious than heaven? Or, can our heart contain our God, if heaven cannot? Oh no! our God is infinite; he cannot be contained in either, and yet he dwells in both. Hear the Psalmist, *To thee I lift up my eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens*, Psal. cxxii. 1. Hear St. Paul; *You are the temple of God, and the spirit of God dwells in you*, 1 Cor. iii. 16. Compare both Testaments, the old and new; and if you seriously believe them both, conclude, we have the same assurance that God dwells in virtuous souls, as that he dwells in heaven.

*The kingdom of God is within you*, Luke xvii. 21. Wheresoever majesty resides, the court is there; and wheresoever the king governs, there his kingdom is. If the Almighty govern all the passions, motions, and affections of our souls; if once he be the sovereign monarch of our hearts, if the love of God give law to all our inclinations, the Holy Ghost is then as truly in us, as the king is in his kingdom, and he is no otherwise in heaven. This is that heaven upon earth, which none can understand, but those devout and pious souls; who by experience *taste and see*, Psal. xxxiii. 9. how  
sweet

sweet God's kingdom is, where Christ governs by faith, and the Holy Ghost by charity; or, as St. Austin says, whose king is truth, whose law is love.

A spirit having no proportion with place if we believe philosophers, is neither here, nor there, nor any where of itself; but only by its operation in a body, which is in some place. When angels formerly appeared with airy bodies, they were truly and substantially present in those human forms, which they inhabited by operating there. Whatever the airy body seemed to do, the angel truly did, the angel moved, the angel walked, the angel spoke, discoursed, conversed with men. The Holy Ghost is likewise truly and substantially present in the soul of a devout and pious christian. He dwells in his heart by operating there; his heart becomes a paradise on earth: The *love of God*, now planted in the middle of it, is the *tree of life*, Gen. ii. 9. The Holy Ghost himself becomes the angel-guardian of the place, and like the cherubim, defends it with a *flaming sword*, Gen. iii. 24. He gives him life, *We live by the spirit*, Gal. v. 25. He gives him motion, *We walk by the spirit*; He gives him speech, 'Tis not you  
that



*that speak*, says our Saviour to his apostles, *but the spirit of God that speaks in you*, Mat. x. 20.

So far you see the parallel betwixt the presence of an angel dwelling in an airy body, and the presence of the Holy Ghost inhabiting in us. Only this difference there is : Philosophers are puzzled to explain the virtue and the operation by which an angel moves the body it assumes ; but Christians, by the light of faith, have this advantage over them ; they plainly read, and understand in Scripture, that the virtue of the Holy Ghost, by which he moves and governs us, is charity ; and, that the operation, which with us he produces in us, is the love of God above all things. *God the Holy Ghost is charity*, 1 John iv. 8. He is the consubstantial love of God the Father and the Son. If charity inspire us, if the love of God, direct us, govern us, and influence the principal designs and actions of our life, we then may reasonably hope, *we have not received the spirit of this world, but the spirit which is of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 12.

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That inclination which is predominant, and governs all the rest, is usually called the spirit of a man. If this be love of honours, riches, pleasures of this world, it is an ambitious, a covetous, a carnal, or, to speak them all at once, a worldly spirit. But if it be the love of God above all things, without any competition of creatures; it is a virtuous, a divine, a holy spirit: then it is that the *Love of God is diffused in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, the holy spirit which is given to us,* Rom. v. 5.

St. Paul, when he came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples, demanded of them, *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?* Acts xix. 1, 2. And I am apt to think, it would not be amiss, to put the question to the Christians of our age. You in whose minds Christ dwells by faith, does the Holy Ghost dwell in your hearts by charity? Is your love suitable to your creed? Do you love God, as you believe he deserves? Do you love him above all things? Your greatest care, is it to please your God? Your greatest grief, is it to have displeased him? In all

all things which deserve deliberation, do you first consult his law, and make it the rule of all your measures? Examine well the whole course of your life; your actions, humours, and designs. What is it that employs your mind the most? What thoughts are those which close your eyes at night, and open them in the morning? Are they fixed upon the only necessary? Do they tend to heaven? All things else, what are they? Are they nothing in comparison of that? If so, you have received the Holy Ghost, the *spirit* of God, *whom the world cannot receive*, John xiv. 17. But, if the sovereign inclination of your hearts be love of honours, riches, pleasures; if your greatest grief and trouble be your disappointment of success in these; if upon all occasions you consult your inclinations, and the maxims of the world, you then may answer, as the Ephesians did: Alas! we are but little acquainted with this Holy Spirit; we have scarce heard of him, we know not what he is: a worldly spirit we have more acquaintance with; but,

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as for the spirit of God, he is a stranger to us. We say our prayers, we frequent the sacraments, we are in the common road of customary duties: but our ambitious spirit, our impatient love of honour is such, that we are more concerned for an affront, than for a mortal sin: our avaricious spirit, our insatiable love of riches is so violent, that we had rather hazard the loss of all the heaven we pretend to, than expose the treasure we possess: our carnal spirit, our incontinent love of pleasure is so passionate, that we had rather quit our right to all eternal joys above, than any way deny ourselves the rotten satisfaction we seek for here below: in short, we love this world so much, that if we might but always have it at command, it is all we ask, we wish no more— *we have received the spirit of this world*, 1. Cor. ii. 12.

I hope I may be pardoned, if I am a little importunate in pressing home this question; *Have you received the Holy Ghost?* Acts xix. 2. Eternity depends upon it: your choice of heaven or hell; your being children  
of

of God or of the devil; your Being saved or damned for ever: all this, (and what is all, if this be not?) All this depends upon the answer to this necessary question. *As many as are led by the spirit of God, says St. Paul, they are the children of God, Rom. viii. 16.* Compute your actions, words, and thoughts, from morning to night, from day to day: does the spirit of God direct and lead you? Or the spirit of this world? If the spirit of God, you are the children of God: If not, hear what the Apostle says, *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9.* He is not a brother of Christ, he is not an adoptive son of his eternal Father, he has a father in hell, but none in heaven. Our Saviour plainly says, *If God were yur Father, you would love me above all things, John viii. 24.* But because you do not, *you are of your father the devil. ver. 44.*

Let those who above all things love the world, consider this, and tremble. Let them not gaze in vain,



upon our Saviour ascending to his Father: let them be assured his Father is not theirs; and that, as certainly as he ascended to his Father in heaven, they shall in time, unless they seriously repent, descend to theirs in hell.

This was the reason, why our Saviour told the Jews, *Whither I go, you cannot come*, John viii. 21. As if he should say, I go to my Father; if he were your father also, then you might bear me company: but, since you *have received the spirit of this world*, 1. Cor. ii. 12. as long as you are governed by the spirit of another father, you may in due time follow him to hell, but it is impossible, without sincere repentance you should ever follow me to heaven: *Whither I go you cannot come*. The Jews amazed to hear it, knew not what he meant. He told them the reason: *I am from above*, says he, *I am not of this world*, John viii. 23. The spirit which governs all my actions is from above; it is not the spirit of this world; it is the spirit of my Father, therefore I go to him. But on the other side, *you are of this world*, *ibid*. You are led by the spirit of this world;

world; and therefore, *Whither I go you cannot come.*

Let us not flatter and deceive ourselves with vain appearances of superficial piety, which float upon the surface of our souls; but sound the very bottom of our hearts, and be assured, that if we find them chiefly fixed upon this world, or any creature in it; we may stand gazing with the men of Galilee, we may contemplate and admire the ascension of our Saviour, but all in vain; all this will be no comfort to us: whither he goes, we cannot follow him. We cannot ascend, unless we first receive the Holy Ghost, nor can we receive him unless we first prepare for his reception.

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### S E C T. V.

*That we ought to prepare our Hearts for this great Grace.*

**W**HEN our Saviour was upon the point of leaving his apostles, after he had been forty days discoursing with them concerning the kingdom of God: the last and most important thing he recommended to their care was, that they

they should prepare themselves for the receiving of the Holy Ghost: *He commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, Acts i. 4.*

*Prepare your hearts*, says the prophet; *prepare your hearts to God, and serve him only, and he will deliver you, 1 Sam. viii. 3.* Prepare your hearts to entertain the Holy Ghost, or else you never will receive him. Prepare materials for *the temple of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 19.* His temple is not to be built and finished in a day: we must have time to carry on the work, and more than ordinary preparations must be made: *With all my might*, says the royal prophet, *I have prepared for the house of my God*; because, says he, *the work is great, and the palace is not for man, but for God, 1 Chron. xxix. 1, 2.*

Our heart has been profaned with idols: our ambition, avarice, and lust, have had their several altars in it; and from time to time, according as occasion served, have offered sacrifice to honours, riches, pleasures. Such a temple,

temple, so profaned, must be demolished, and a new one built upon the ruins of it. *Make yourselves a new heart, and a new spirit*, says the prophet, Ezek. xviii. 31. Although it be God's work, it is not only his but also ours. As much as lies in us, we must co-operate and labour with him: and the more difficult it is, the more industriously we must endeavour to effect it. *With all our might*, 1. Chron. xxix. 2. with all our industry and diligence, we must prepare our heart, that it may be a temple of the Holy Ghost.

*O that we had but wings like a Dove,* (the wings of that Dove, which once descended visibly upon our Saviour,) *then should we fly away and be at rest*, Psal. lv. 6. Our hearts should fly away from all things in this world, and be at rest in heaven. If once the love of God inflame our hearts with ardent and continual desires of being happy with him, we shall find, that these desires are wings by which our hearts aspire and mount to heaven. But, if the love of any thing in this

world bind us to the earth, we then shall find, that our celestial desires are clogged with earthly passions; and although we now and then, with a faint sigh, look up to heaven, yet our stronger inclinations will always bear us down. He who is wholly disengaged from all the charms of a deluding world, he only is at liberty. St. Austin says, the wings of his soul are free; but if his heart be any way ensnared with any other love, he then has birdlime in his wings; he cannot fly away, and be at rest.

The apostles themselves were not prepared for the receiving of the Holy Ghost, as long as they were satisfied with being happy in our Saviour's company on earth. If any satisfaction here below, could innocently challenge so much place in their affections, surely innocence itself descending down from heaven, had the best and clearest title to their love. And yet as long as they were of St. Peter's mind, and thought with themselves, *'Tis good for us to be here*, Mat. xvii. 4. it is good to make our tabernacle here; so long as we find  
they



they were not fit for the reception of the Holy Ghost. *I tell you the truth,* says our Saviour, *'tis expedient for you that I go away,* John xvi. 7. because you love me with so little resignation, and are so unwilling that I leave you; therefore it is expedient for you, that I now ascend to raise your hearts above the world, and carry them to heaven with me. If I go not away, your love will creep upon the earth, the spirit of the world will still possess your hearts, the spirit of God will find no habitation there, ver. 7. *The comforter will not come. But if I depart,* if I (whom you so dearly love) ascend, your minds and hearts will follow me to heaven, they will be raised above the reach of all things in this world, the spirit of the world will have no dwelling there; you then will be prepared for the receiving of the Holy Ghost; and when you are so, *I will send him to you,* ver. 7.

When the Holy Ghost came, he filled all the House where they were sitting, Acts ii. 2. Wherever he comes he fills the house, he takes it all to himself; and it is no wonder, being infinite,

infinite, he takes up so much room. As God would cease to be immense, if there were any corner of the world in which he is not present ; so the Holy Ghost would cease to be our infinite and sovereign good, if any corner of our heart have any thing lodged in it, that excludes him. When once we have received the Holy Ghost, our heart is the kingdom of God. He is the absolute and only monarch that commands it, he cannot alienate the least part of his title to the government ; he cannot any way admit of a companion in his throne. Our heart is the throne of the most high : and, if we remember what became of Lucifer, I hope it will suffice to make us sensible, how dangerous a thing it is, to place a creature in the throne of God, and make it *like the highest*, Isa. xiv. 14.

St. Austin wondering at the overflowing measure of God's holy spirit in the apostles hearts, observes, that the reason why they were so full of God, was because they were so empty of his creatures : they were very full, says he, because they were very empty ;  
because

because they were so empty of the spirit of this world, therefore they were so full of the spirit of God.

O that our hearts were empty; O that they were purified and cleansed like theirs, from all inordinate affections to this world; we then should be prepared like them, and ready to receive the fulness of the Holy Ghost. It is a great work, and will require some time; why are we then so slow in undertaking it? *Why do we stand gazing?* Acts i. 11. we gaze, we lift our eyes to heaven, but yet we stand; our feet are fixed upon the earth. We prefer heaven before hell, of the two we had rather be there; but of the three, (if it were possible) we had rather be always here.

*How long will you love vanity?* says the Psalmist, Psal. iv. 2. This world is nothing else but vanity: how long will you love it? It is *vanity and vexation of spirit*, Eccles. iv. 16. How long will you delight in it. It flies before you *like a shadow*, Ch. vi. 12. How long will you run after it? Alas! it is but a shadow if you overtake

take it. *The world passes away*, 1 John iv. 17. It is an unkind ill-natured world; which passes by us with a flattering smile, and will not stay a moment with us. If it had ever been a true and faithful friend to any man, we should have some pretence to justify our expectation of its being kind: but since we know, it never was so to its greatest favourites, we may be sure, it never will be so to us. The time will come when we shall plainly see (altho' perhaps too late,) that all is vanity; and we shall love no more what we are now so fond of. The love of all those trifles, with which our infancy was once much pleased, is now forgot; and we so much condemn those childish entertainments, that unless we saw the same in other children, we should scarce believe, we ever loved them. As when we advance in years, we see the folly of our childhood; so upon our death bed, we as plainly see the folly of our life: we then discover that the honours, riches, and pleasures of this world, are only so many serious trifles, which are therefore more ridiculous, because  
more

more serious. When once the period of our time approaches ; when we are upon the borders of eternity ; when we are, as it were, betwixt two worlds, the end of this, and the beginning of the next, which will never have end ; then it is that all our joys begin to vanish out of sight ; they are the same to us, as if they never had been present : then it is, that all our miseries are every one in view, such miseries as never can be past, but will for all eternity, be always present : when once that hour comes, we shall be wise enough to undervalue and contemn what we so dearly love ; but then, I fear we shall be wise too late ; our useless wisdom will not rise in judgment for us, but against us. O let us now endeavour to be wise, and disengage our hearts from all inordinate affection to this world ; that we may be prepared for the receiving of this grace, which is the best and surest pledge of the eternal glory, which we hope for, in the world to come.

MOTIVES



# MOTIVES OF F E A R.

## SECT. I.

*How much it imports us, to remember  
the Day of Judgment.*

WHEN the Disciples asked our Saviour, what would be the *sign of his coming, and of the end of the world*, Matt. xxiv. 3. Our Saviour answered. that *the day and hour*, ver. 36. were not to be known before-hand; that his *coming*, ver. 27. would be like a flash of lightning, when they least expected him. *Therefore*, says he, ver. 44. *be ready; for in such an hour as you think not, the son of man will come. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*, ver. 35. The world shall have an end. The son of man shall come to judge the world. The hour of his coming shall

shall surprise us, when we think not of it. If we knew before-hand, we should certainly prepare. And we have much more reason, since we do not know it.

But, alas! our Saviour Jesus Christ himself has prophesied, ver. 38. that *As in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, till the day that Noah entered the ark, ver. 39. and knew not, till the flood came and took them all away: so also, shall be the coming of the son of man.* He told us how it would be, and every day we see how true it is. We mind nothing but eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage; we seek for nothing but diversion, sport, and pastime; we now rejoice; but then, when the world ends, our joys will end with it; then we shall grieve, and not only then, but for ever. *Then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, Mat. xxiv. 30.*

Then shall all mourn. Not all the just; not all God's friends; not all devout and pious christians, who not only in their baptism, but also during  
life,

life, renounced the vanities and pleasures of this world. All these will have just reason to abound with joy, at the approach of their so long desired, and everlasting happiness. *They sowed with tears, but now shall reap with joy,* Psal. cxxvi. 5.

All the tribes of the earth, all those whose hearts were always fixed upon the earth, upon the honours, riches, and pleasures of the earth; they shall all mourn, and not without sufficient reason: for, 1. they shall see the fatal end of all their transitory happiness. 2. They shall see the sad beginning of their everlasting misery.

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## S E C T. II.

*That our last Day is the fatal End of all our transitory Happiness.*

**A**S on the one side, nothing can be truly little, which is infinite; so on the other, nothing can be truly great, which has an end. *Our God is great,* says the prophet, Baruch iii. 25. *and has no end.* As if he had a mind to  
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let us understand, that God himself, with all his other attributes, would be but little, if he had one; that all this world is therefore inconsiderable, and that the next is therefore to be valued above all things, because it is a world without end. This is the common misery attending all our happiness. All that is past, is nothing; all that we enjoy at present, is but one poor moment; all that is to come is every moment less and less, approaching nigher to the final period of its future being which is nothing.

The very thoughts of this, is so afflicting, that it puts a stop to all our joys, and makes us miserable in the full career of our felicity; we need no more to damp our spirits in the midst of our enjoyments, than the importunity of this unwelcome thought; all this will shortly have an end. The Paradise of our first parents, would have been to them no Paradise at all, had they foreseen the end of it. And when God pleased to interdict the eating of the fatal fruit, he seemed to judge, that nothing could be more effectual

effectual to contain them in their duty, than to let them know, that death should put an end to all, if ever they presumed to eat it. As it was then their chief and only comfort, to survey the vast extent and great variety of their delights, and at the same time confidently say, all this is ours for ever, if we please. So it had been impossible for any artifice of the malicious serpent, to surprise them, or prevail upon them, if he had not flattered them with some assurance that they should not die; but still be truly happy, that is, happy without end.

The devil does not now pretend to face us down, we shall not die: he knows that so notorious a cheat, would never pass upon us. But yet for fear least we should undervalue all the vain allurements of a miserable world, he whispers in our ear, we shall not die so soon: he has not the impudence to tell us, that the world will never end, but that it will not end so soon as we imagine: *Thou hast many goods*, says the rich man in the gospel, *laid up for many years*, Luke xii. 19.

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This is in short the sum of our felicity on earth. The happiest man that ever lived, could say no more than this. He could not say that he had all which he desired; he could not but observe by sad experience that he was still unsatisfied, and that his small possessions were nothing to his great desires. Nor could he say, that what he had, would always be his own: he could not but be well acquainted with the truth of what man is; he daily dies; he every moment is upon his journey to the grave: *he wastes away, gives up the ghost, and where is he?* Job. xiv. 10. However, he might say, to comfort his insatiable soul, Altho' thou hast not all that thou can'st wish for, thou hast many goods; and though thou can'st not possibly enjoy them always yet they are laid up for many years; thy palace is magnificent, thy entertainment splendid, thy attendance numerous, thy gardens are a paradise of pleasure and delight, thy honour equal to thy fortune, and thy power equal to both; the world admires thee, courts thee, and almost adores thee; is not  
this

this enough? thou hast many goods. And why should any melancholy apprehensions seize thy spirits, and disturb thy mind with fearful thoughts of loosing what thou hast? there is no danger whilst thou livest, and thou art in the flower of thy age, just ripe for pleasure, healthy, vigorous, and like to live those many years: and what hast thou to do, but *take thy ease, eat, drink and be merry*, Luke xii. 19. as if thou wert to live for ever?

Behold, the best that we can make of the most happy state we hope for here. We dare not look before us, lest we see the end of all our joys: we blindly doat upon these darlings of our passion, and endeavour to forget the misery of their mortality and ours. We are not able to support a serious thought of our perpetual decay; and though we love ourselves above all things, yet we hate the very sight of our condition; we cannot endure to look into ourselves; and as an idle solitude is ever troublesome, because we love no company so little as our own; so the great reason, why the company  
of

of any other person is so pleasing, is, because it hinders us from thinking of ourselves.

The greatest, and most happy man, whose heart is fixed upon this world, would soon be melancholy, if he had but leisure to reflect, that every moment leads him to the period of his happiness. The doleful prospect of a future separation is so terrible, that he endeavours all he can, to think of nothing farther than the present. All the busy agitation of his mind, the exercises of his body, and the pastimes of his conversation, are delightful to him, chiefly upon this account; because they are diversions; that is, because they fix his mind upon the present moment, and divert him from the melancholy thought, that all his happiness must have an end.

If the bare thought of our approaching period be so doleful, even at a distance, where uncertainty gives room to make the most we can of our felicity; if, I say, the very thought of it be so afflicting, what will the presence of it be, when with our own eyes we shall see

see that fatal end, which now we are so much afraid to think of? We now are merry and rejoice, because we banish from us the uneasy apprehension; but then, all those who will be sad spectators of this doleful scene, will be no longer able to divert themselves from thinking of the misery they see before them. *Then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn.* Matt. xxiv. 30.

To close the eyes of any dying friend we dearly love, is apt to move our tears; although our other friends, who yet survive are still a comfort to us. But when their dearest friend, the world itself, begins to die; when all their comfort, all at once forsakes them; when the sun and moon grows dark, and the expiring world begins to close its eyes, then they shall all mourn.

When once that dismal day is come, which the prophet Joel calls the *great day of the Lord, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness, a day of tribulation and distress*, chap. ii. 2. &c. When cataracts of fire shower down upon their heads, as if the stars themselves fell from the firmament; when

in convulsions of its mortal agony, the earth trembles, and hell itself lies gaping under their feet; then they shall plainly see the meaning of that vision in the Revelations, chap. x. 5, 6. which represents an angel standing with one foot upon the raging sea, another on the trembling land, *lifting his hand to Heaven, and swearing by him that lives for ever, that time shall be no more.*

Poor miserable wretches! There was once a time, when honours, dignities and titles, recommended them to the admiring world, whose eyes were dazzled with the glory of their greatness; they were followed, waited on, and celebrated in their generation; but now alas! they shall be so no more. There was a time when they abounded in the overflowing measure of their wealth; their palaces were sumptuous, and all things suitable to the aspiring height of their ambition; but now, no more; their great magnificence is buried in the ruins of the world; their gold and silver melted down into the earth, from whence it came; and all their pride lies levelled with the com-

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mon dust, to which all things return. There was a time, when all the sinful pleasures of the world attended them ; when they denied their passions nothing that they asked, when they had full command of all that they desired, and rather cloyed, than satisfied their brutal appetites ; but now, no more. Their honour, riches, pleasures, all are at an end ; their time is at an end ; their time shall be no more.

When, as it happens frequently amongst the various accidents of human life, we are deprived of some particular enjoyment which we passionately love ; though we lament and grieve, yet we have still some comfort left ; it is not a total deprivation of all that we enjoy ; the damage is supported by some other pleasures and conveniences. If one friend die, our other friend survive. If one forsake us, we may find another faithful to us. Or, if they all abandon us yet our misfortune is not universal ; we have always something left, which we can think upon without affliction, and repose our wearied thoughts. He that is dangerously  
sick

sick of one or two diseases, is not at the same time sick of all the rest. Whatever his condition is, he always has some hopes of being better; and although these hopes are very little, they are still some little comfort to a man in misery. But, when this dreadful day is come, which puts an end to time, it puts an end to all their hopes; all that they ever loved, or now desire, abandons them; their inclinations are more lively than they ever were, and all are disappointed. Then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, to see the fatal end of all their transitory happiness. But, alas! this is not all: they shall have much more reason to lament and grieve, when at the same time they behold the sad beginning of their everlasting misery.

## S E C T. III.

*That our last Day is the sad Beginning of  
our everlasting Misery.*

**W**E have seen the dreadful symptoms of an agonizing world; the terrible convulsions of expiring nature; and the final end of all that sinners love with so much passion; an end of all ambition, avarice, and pleasure; an end of all their honours, riches and amours; an end of politic designs; of ancient families, of nuptial joys; an end of idle conversations, balls and plays; an end of beauty, wit, and courage; an end of all their feasting, drinking, and diverting; an end of all their mirth, delight, and pastime; and, which of all things is most terrible to a despairing soul, an end of sin, but not an end of the sinner; an end of pleasure, but not an end of pain; an end of time, but not an end of their eternity, which will eternally begin and never have an end.

end. After hundreds, thousands, millions, not of years, but ages ; if we may suppose that Heaven and Earth, with all that they contain, were changed into numeral figures ; at the foot of the account, whatever it amount to, you may find it written, here eternity begins. Moreover, if you multiply this number by itself, and by the same rule multiply the product of it, all is nothing to eternity ; wherever this innumerable number ends, eternity begins.

If all be nothing to eternity, what will the inconsiderable number of those years which sinners prodigally spend in sin ? What will it then appear to be ? Will it not seem incomparably less than nothing ? And will not sinners then have too much reason to lament, that for so short a moment, so much less than nothing, they have forfeited the eternal joys of Heaven, and incurred the everlasting pains of Hell. *What is a man advantaged*, says our Saviour ! Luke ix. 25. *if he gain the whole world and lose himself.* Alas ! poor souls, what comfort is it, to have gained the

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world,

world, and lose yourselves? To have lost all happiness, and gained, if I may call it gain, all misery, and all for nothing.

What pains, and by what means they are to suffer, is a question fitter for our curiosity than our edification. It is enough, to know as much of Hell as the apostle tells us of Heaven, 1 Cor. ii. 9. *Neither the eye has seen, nor the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of any man, what unspeakable pains and torments the Almighty has prepared in the next life, for those who have in this offended him. It is enough, that God is certainly as just as he is God, and therefore infinitely just. It is enough that the enormity of sin, which he so patiently endures, is aggravated by the greatness of his majesty and therefore infinitely infinite.* It

*(a) All the most effectual and most proper means.* follows evidently hence, that all *(a)* which God's wisdom can invent, all that his justice *(b)* can exact, and all that his omnipotence *(c)* can put in execution, will be all

em-



(c) *According to the rigour of the sentence.* employed to punish those who have offended him. It follows also, that it is as much impossible for any man to comprehend

the great excess of those eternal pains, as it is to understand God's wisdom, justice, and omnipotence ; all which are infinitely raised above the reach of human reason. However, we may easily conjecture something, by considering God's justice in this world, and judging thence, what it may be hereafter.

If the just themselves are so severely punished in this world, if it be true, as the Psalmist says, Psal. xxxiv. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous.* If even God's friends who are so faithful to him, undergo such punishments for little failings in their duty, what will become of his enemies, who forfeit all their title to his friendship, by their grievous sins ?

If in the days of overflowing mercy, which appears so eminently above all his works, he gave such signal instances of his avenging anger ; if even when his pity (in a manner) held his hands, the

the fury of his wrath broke loose, and with an universal deluge laid the world so deep in water, that amongst so many millions, not a single sinner could escape; what will become of miserable sinners at the day of judgment, when the end of time shall put an end to all his goodness, all his kindness, all his mercy to sinners, and begin the triumph of eternal justice? When our God will be to us no longer good, no longer kind, no longer merciful, but only just; eternally and infinitely just.

Our Saviour Jesus will not then ap-

(a) *It is too late to be cured or redeemed.*

(b) *As judge he appoints them to that place.*

(c) *Not an act of pardon.*

pear as the physician (a) and redeemer of our souls, but only as the judge of all our actions; and even to his friends (b) at his right hand, he will not shew himself in any other quality; the very sentence of their happiness will be an act of justice only, (c) not of mercy. Our Lord, says the apostle, at that day, will be a righteous judge. It is true, it was

was nothing but the merciful assistance of his grace, which heretofore enabled them to fight, and finish well their course ; but now in the rewarding of

(d) *No longer inclined to pardon.* his friends according to his promise, (d) he is no longer merciful, if we believe St. Paul, but only righteous and just.

If at that day he would be merciful to any, he would surely be so to his friends ; and since the best and faithful-est of all his servants find no mercy (a)

(a) *It is too late to ask for mercy.* at their trial, can his enemies expect it? It is called the day of judgment to distinguish it

from all these other days of mercy : and, if in these he showered down fire from Heaven, it is no wonder, if in those the stars themselves will seem to fall ; if Sodom and Gomorah were consumed, it is easy to believe, that then the earth will all of it be laid in ashes. But alas ! this universal deluge of devouring fire, together with the darkness of the sun and moon, the roarings of the sea, and howlings of the wind

wind and air; all this is but a prelude to the misery of sinners; this is only the *beginning of their sorrows*, Mat. xxiv. 8. This is nothing but their summons to appear before the bar; and it is the dreadful apprehension of their judgment and damnation, which torments them with agonizing fear.

There was a time when life was sweet; but now they hate it. There was once a time, when the despair of living was their greatest pain; but now the scene is changed, and the despair of dying is incomparably more tormenting. *In those days*, says the beloved disciple, Rev. ix. 6. *Men shall seek death, and shall not find it; they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.* There was a time, when sinners laughed at all the fears and apprehensions of this day; but now the *Time of laughing*, Eccl. iii. 4. will be past; nor will it be, as Solomon calls it, a time to mourn; it will not be a time, but an eternity to mourn.

Then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn. Not only those, who whilst they lived, were thought to carry visibly

bly the mark of reprobation in their foreheads; but also, such as lived great saints in the esteem of men, and died great sinners in the sight of God; shall then desire to die again, and seek for an eternal death, and shall not find it. Then shall their concealed abominations, all their shameful actions, all their secret works of darkness, come to light. Then nothing shall be covered, nothing so industriously hid, but what *shall be revealed*, Mat. x. 26. to all the world. Not only those who took such care to hide their sins from others, but even those who formerly were used to hide them from themselves, shall clearly see the malice of their palliated crimes. *Then they shall see, and then they shall mourn*, Mat. xxiv. 30.

We are now willing to live peaceably and quietly within ourselves; we do not much delight in the remorse of a guilty mind; and therefore, we contrive some kind of conscience for every thing we do. We are uneasy at the thought of everlasting pains; and therefore, if we ever take ourselves to task, we rake together all we can,



can, to make a favourable judgment of our state. As the examen rather is designed to please ourselves, than God, it is generally very superficial. We look upon our actions all in gross, without enquiring much into the drift and chief design of them. We look upon the outward shew; the approbation and esteem of men; the example of some, who pass for good and virtuous, and yet have often done the same as we do: our being free (as we suppose) from many faults, which we observe not in ourselves; our great abhorrence of some certain sins, which we observe in others; our being punctually and religiously precise in some small matters, some exterior mortifications, some particular devotions which we take a fancy to; and thus we frame a false idea of the miserable state we shall be found in, when we come before the bar. We now are proud, and willing to excuse ourselves; but then the testimony of our clearer sighted conscience, will confound and humble us. Our passions blind us now; we see not what we truly are; but then the  
sun

sun of justice will arise, and scatter all the darkness which conceals us from ourselves. The piercing rays, the all-discovering beams of truth will break like lightning through the clouds of our affected ignorance, when once the Son of man appears to judge the world.

If there be any possibility of cheating his all-seeing wisdom; of calling back the time of his indulgent mercy, or escaping from the hands of his Almighty power: were there any possibility of this, or were there any friend from whom the guilty might expect the least assistance; it would be some little comfort.

They had once a true and faithful friend who dearly loved them; came from heaven to instruct them, and conduct them thither; lived a painful and laborious life amongst them; and altho' neglected, scorned, and persecuted by them, yet continued constant in his love, and to redeem them, paid their ransom with the price of his own blood. But now their best and only friend becomes their greatest enemy. He loved them once;

E

but

but love so long neglected, and so much abused, is now quite changed into a mortal and eternal hatred. He invited all of them to come to him, whenever they had need of his assistance, Mat. xi. 28. *Come to me all you that labour*; but now, alas! it is too late to come; his patience now is spent; and in the fury of his everlasting indignation, he for ever banishes them from him, Mat. xxv. 41. *Go from me ye accursed. Go* ambitious souls and leave your honourable titles all behind you; go and seek the best preferment you can find, amongst the *Devil and his angels*; ibid: ver. 41. *Go* insatiable misers; go and take possession of that misery which you have purchased with the loss of your beloved treasure; go voluptuous wretches; you who formerly have wished your flames might never burn: go now and burn for ever, in the everlasting flames of hell.

Behold the dreadful sentence we must all expect, unless we follow his advice, who then will be our judge, Luke xxi. 36. *Watch therefore* says he,

he, and pray always ; that you then may be accounted worthy to escape, and stand before the Son of man. Alas ! Our dear Redeemer takes no pleasure in condemning us. No man, says St. Austin, who designs to strike us, bids us have a care. Our Saviour often warns us, often calls upon us, often bids us have a care. St. Paul exhorts us in his name, Rom. xiii. 11. *It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep ;* It is now the hour to go with tears of repentance to the throne of grace ; that then we may appear with confidence and joy before the great tribunal of his justice : it is now the hour to harken to him, Matt. xi, 28. *Come to me all you that labour ;* that then we may be sure to hear him call us to him, Mat. xxv. 34. *Come ye blessed ;* come and reap the fruit of all your labours ; come, and take possession of those everlasting joys, which were prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Amen.

MOTIVES

E 2

MOTIVES  
OF  
H O P E.

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SECT. I.

*How unreasonable a thing it is for any  
Sinner to Despair.*

**T**HE greatest mystery of christian morality, consists in the equal balancing of hope and fear, betwixt God's mercy and his justice; that we may neither be secure in sin, because he is so merciful; nor yet despond, because he is so just. Presumption and despair are the two rocks, betwixt which all christians ought to steer an even course; and so avoid the one, as not to dash against the other. It is perhaps the greatest secret of the devil's art. He first inclines us to presume; and we no sooner see the danger of it, but he tempts



tempts us to despair. Thus he commences ; thus he finishes his work.

I must confess, the greatest part of mankind being so insensible, so stupid, so immersed in worldly cares and pleasures, is enough to justify the pious zeal of those who frequently proclaim the menaces of an offended Majesty, and with the formidable noise of hell, damnation, and everlasting torments, labour to awake and rouse them from the lethargy of sin. But, when they are awake, and looking round about them, take a prospect of their miserable state ; when every horrid crime appears in its own dreadful shape ; when multitudes of past offences crowd into their minds, and overwhelm their heavy thoughts with a despairing expectation of no less than everlasting misery : Alas ! poor souls, it is now a seasonable time to magnify the motives of their fear. If ever comfort and encouragement were necessary to allay the pains and anguishes of a despairing soul : now is the time. What shall we say ? Tell them they need not

E 3

fear ?

fear? Oh no! the malice of their grievous sins is infinite; the danger of their lamentable state is greater than they can imagine; let but their hope be equal to their fear, they cannot fear too much. How then shall we encourage their expiring hope? Ill tell you how.

If God were only just, and were not also powerful and merciful, a sinner then might lawfully despair; but when God's power and mercy both concur to comfort the desponding heart of an afflicted penitent, what can he wish for more? There are but two conditions requisite to qualify the person, upon whose assistance we depend, that we may safely hope, and with a loving confidence assure ourselves of his protection. The first is, that he can relieve us, if he will: the second, that he will relieve us if we please. Will, without power, signifies but little: power, without will, signifies much less; but when they both meet in the person of a friend, to whom we always have a free access, who certainly can help us if he will, and no less certainly will help

help us if we please; then, let our present misery be ever so great, let the approaching danger of our future ruin every day seem greater, we may with trembling hearts expect the helping hand which can and will deliver us; but all our fear can never exclude our hope; it cannot rob us of that comfort, satisfaction, and joy, which so much confidence in such a friend inspires.

If when a sinner struggles with his chains, endeavours to break loose; and the more he struggles, the more he finds himself engaged; (which the all-seeing wisdom frequently permits, to humble a proud soul :) if then these two great truths were settled in his mind, to wit, that God can free him, if he will, and that he will not fail to free him, if he please: O! with what pleasure would he relish the assurance of this loving confidence! with how much transport of a joyful mind, would he recite those words of St. Paul, 1 Tim. i, 12. *I know in whom I have believed; I know in whom I put my*  
E 4 trust;

trust; I know, and am persuaded, he is able to deliver me. I am assured, he is not only powerful but merciful; and therefore, I am certain, he both can and will assist me.

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## S E C T. II.

*That God can help us if he will.*

**D**IVINITY and boundless power, are so much the same, that no man can deny the one, and own the other. There is no truth so evident in which the world so universally agrees, as God's omnipotence. Every body knows that nothing is impossible to God. It is one of the first truths which a philosopher demonstrates, or a Christian believes. Almighty is his name, the name we know him by, the name he answers to whenever we call upon him.

What need I then discourse upon a truth, which every body knows? The reason is, because although we know, it well enough, we very seldom think of it.

We

We all know, nothing is impossible to God; and that the lamentable state of a poor sinner, cannot be so desperate, but that he retrieve him. And yet how little do we think of this when we are tempted to despair? Do we not then behave ourselves as if we doubted of it? I am afraid, that at the best we pray like him, of whom St. Mark makes mention, chap. ix. 22.—*Lord if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.* I fear we often are incredulous, and have just reason to repeat with tears his humble prayer, ver. 23. *Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief.*

If *David* that great saint, 1. Sam. xiii. 14. according to God's heart, who looking back to take a view of all his past iniquities, saw at a distance only some few sins, which he had long since washed away with penitential tears; if he could scarce support the terror of that melancholy prospect, as he says himself, Psal. xxxviii. 3, 4, 6, 10, and *all that day long went mourning* for his sins: if his heart panted and his



strength failed him ; if he had no rest, because he was overhead in his iniquities, which like a heavy burthen were too heavy for him : if he, I say, were thus perplexed with fear, and almost ready to despair of his salvation ; have not I just cause to apprehend much more the danger of such doubts in greater sinners who are almost surfeited with sin, before they seriously begin to look behind them, and compute terrible arrears of all their past offences ?

I must confess, the difficulties which occur in the conversation of a sinner are insupportable, if compared to the weak strength of our corrupted nature ; and if the possibility of working our salvation be considered only with regard to human frailty, there appears no hope of compassing so great a work. Such is the ignorance and blindness of our understanding ; such is the malice and perverseness of our will ; our inclinations are so prone to liberty ; and the restraint of our unreasonable humours is so sensibly uneasy to us, that a thorough reformation of our lives is far  
above

above our single strength. Without the grace of God, we neither have the wisdom to contrive it, nor the courage to begin it, nor the power to perform it.

But yet this darkness of our reason, though we cannot of ourselves dispel it, may be dissipated by a lively faith in him, *who enlightens every man that comes into the world*, John i. 9. This depravation and corruption of our will, (although it be to us alone impossible) may, by the sweet and forcible impulses of a powerful grace, be changed and rectified; this obstinate rebellion of our appetite against the rule of reason and the precepts of a christian life, (although we have often found ourselves unable to reduce it to the terms of just obedience,) may easily be conquered by omnipotence.

If sin has so much blinded us, that we can hardly see our danger; if the noise of worldly vanities has made us almost deaf to all good council; if the habit of our sins, has lamed us, so that we can scarcely move a foot towards  
heaven

heaven; if we are blind, deaf, lame, nay, even dead to God, and all that is good, (no person can be in a worse condition than this) all this is nothing to the powerful hand of God; such miracles as these were his familiar exercise on earth, Matt. xi. 5. *The blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dead are raised to life.* All this our God can easily perform, in favour of us, whensoever he pleases.

*Lord; if thou wilt,* says the leprous man, *thou canst make me clean,* Matt. viii. 2. Let the diseases of a sinful soul be ever so inveterate, so deeply rooted in the heart, he clearly and distinctly comprehends the nature of them all; he knows exactly the proportion and virtue of his remedies, and all of them obey the word of his command, Matt. viii. 3. *I will,* says he, *be thou cleansed* (when once God says the word, the work is done,) *immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*

*Create in me, O my God, create in me a clean heart,* Psal. l. I ask not any thing but what is easy to thee.

Alas!

Alas! it is to me impossible; but thou, my God, canst do it with more ease than I can ask. Behold my misery with pity and compassion. Behold me indigent and naked, clothed with nothing but the horrid scruf of my uncleanness. Behold me blind, deaf, lame and almost dead with contagious leprosy of sin, which covers me from head to foot, and has not left a sound part in me. Conscious of my unworthiness, after so long neglecting my condition, after so long confiding in my own weak strength, after so long despairing of my health, because I thought I could do any thing, and found I could not cure myself; conscious, I say, of my unworthiness, I scarce pretend to ask for mercy; I only cast myself upon my knees and face prostrate before thy feet, exposing and laying open all my grievous distempers, which, every one of them (though I am humbly silent) every one speaks loudly my necessities, and begs, with all the moving eloquence of misery, thy pity and assistance. I know  
my

my sins provoke thy justice, whilst my misery appeals to thy Almighty power : but thy faithful servant David tells me, that the Israelites provoked thee also ; and nevertheless, not for thy sake, but *for thy name's sake*, Psal. cvi. 8. Thou was pleased to *save them ; that thou mightest make thy mighty power known*. This is the first foundation of my hope : I know the credit of thy power is engaged in their behalf, who trust entirely in it, firmly expect it, and depend upon it ; and therefore in this posture, I present myself with loving confidence before thy feet, resolving there to expect with all humility and patience, when thou shalt please to cast an eye upon me, and either find the benefit of being cured, or, (which appears to be impossible) die in the hands of an omnipotent physician. Ah, my dear Jesus ! this is all that I can do ; and even this I cannot do without thy grace ; but when I have done this, my comfort is, that thou canst do the rest : *Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*, Matt. viii.

Dear



Dear Christians, let us pause a while, and with a serious attention, behold this leper at our Saviour's feet : behold the lively image of a sinner, and the perfect model of a penitent: behold both what we are, and what we ought to be. In his disease, we see our misery : in his behaviour we see our duty ; in his disease, we see the sad effects of sin ; we see the strong temptations and assaults of a most terrible despair : in his behaviour, we see the fruits of true repentance : we see the victory of a triumphant hope, and the great comfort which attends a loving confidence in God's omnipotence.

O what a comfort it is to an humble penitent, to be assured, that as God gives him all he has, so he can give him all he wants ! If we are almost quite oppressed with those dryness and desolations of mind, which none can know but by experience ! St. Paul tells us, 2 Cor. ix. 8. *God is able to make all grace abound in us :* if we labour under the perpetual violence of importunate temptations ; St. Paul assures us,  
Heb.

Heb. ii. 18. *God is able to succour those that are tempted:* If our temptations are so strong, and we so negligent, that after some resistance we relapse into our sins; if we rise again, and yet fall; if we renew our resolutions, and when we think ourselves securest, are surpris'd and fall again; St. Paul assures us, Rom. xiv. 4. *God is able to make us stand:* If having tried all ways we can imagine, we are at a loss, and know not either what to think, or what to ask; the same Saint tells us, Ephes. iii. 20. *God is able to do all things more abundantly than we can ask or think.*

*Is any thing too hard for God?* Gen. xviii. 14. Can any thing be hard to him whose power is infinite, and whose will is his power? 1 Sam. ii. 6. *Our Lord kills and makes alive; brings to the grave and raises up:* His power accompanies our souls as far as the gates of hell itself, and brings them back again. Although your soul, quite overgrown with sin, may be (perhaps) in the all-seeing eye of God, a much  
more

more horrid object than the foulest devil in hell; nevertheless, go confidently with the leper to our Saviour; croud in amongst the multitudes that follow him; cast yourself down upon your knees and face; say, with a truly contrite, truly humble heart, Mat. viii. 2. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*, then shall you hear him graciously return that comfortable answer; *I will; be thou clean*. Then shall you be transported with excess of joy, to find and feel the truth of what I now advance; to wit, that God not only can relieve us, if he will, but also, will relieve us, if we please.

### S E C T. III.

*That God will help us if we please.*

**A**Lthough God's power be the first foundation of our hope, his mercy always ready to assist us, is the principal, if not the only motive of it. This was the comfortable meditation  
with

with which the royal prophet counter-balanced all his fears, Psal. xxvi. 3. *Thy mercy, says he, thy loving kindness is always before my eyes.* Without this comfort, he would never have supported the remorsefulness of his conscience, Psal. l. 4. *his sin was ever before him:* his continual apprehensions and frightful thoughts would certainly have driven him into a deep despair, had not God's *mercy always been before him,* Psal. xxvi. The very thought of God revived his drooping spirits; he could not so much as think of him, without thinking of his mercy; to be good and merciful were to him one and the self same thing, Psal. lix 17. *My God is my defence,* says he; *and the God of my mercy.* If he lifted up his eyes to heaven with enflamed desires of being happy there; he adored that mercy which preserved the angels, and rewarded them with glory, Psal xxxvi. 5. *Thy mercy, O Lord is in the Heavens,* If he looked down and took a prospect of this vale of miseries, he admired to see God's mercy stoop so low, to see it most appear where there

there is most occasion for it, to see it superabound where sin abounds, Psal. xxxiii. 5. *The earth is full of his mercy.* If he looked before him, he beheld God's mercy starting first, preventing and fore-running all his good designs and enterprises, Psal. lix. 10. *His mercy will prevent me.* If he looked behind him, he beheld the self-same mercy following him, promoting, carrying on, and perfecting his good endeavours; Psal. xxiii. 6. *His mercy, shall follow me all the days of my life.* Which way soever he cast his eye, he saw himself defended and surrounded with God's mercy, himself the centre, mercy the circumference, Psal. xxxii. 10. *Him that trusts in God, mercy shall compass him about.* Thus did this saint, who once had been a sinner; thus did he comfort and encourage his afflicted soul, whenever the remembrance of his sins oppressed his mind; and thus may we in imitation of him. Thus may we also answer all the troublesome suggestions of our panic fears; confronting sin with grace, justice with  
mercy



mercy, fear with hope, and loving confidence in him, whose mercy still is infinite, and always will be so, Psal. c. 5.. *His mercy is everlasting.*

All this, you will say, is little comfort to a sinner, who is day and night beset with all the terrifying spectres of a guilty conscience. Every body knows that God is infinitely merciful. But yet the word of God assures us, and it is a fundamental truth, which every christian is acquainted with, Mat. xxxii. 14. *That few are chosen amongst many which are called; that the gate which leads to life, is strait and narrow, and that there are but few who find it,* Mat. vii. 14. So, that all the splendid appearance of God's mercy, when it is well examined, seems to vanish out of sight, or shrink into a little compass, if compared with the innumerable numbers of those reprobates, Rom. ix. 22. *who are prepared and fitted for destruction.* Is not this enough to make a sinner tremble? A sinner who is conscious to himself of being much more guilty in the sight of God, than many millions  
of

of those souls who are already gone before him, and already suffer the eternal flames of hell.

These thoughts, I must confess, are terrible, to him whose eyes are open, by God's grace, to see the malice of his sins, and see death, judgment, and damnation attend: such thoughts as these, to such a man, are terrible beyond expression. But however, if a man be more afraid than hurt, where is the harm of his fear? Are we not all obliged to humble our proud hearts *under the powerful hand of God*, 1 Pet. v. 6. and *work out our salvation with fear and trembling?* Phil. ii. 12. Is not our obligation to fear, consistent with our greater motives, greater obligations to hope? It is one of the most dangerous mistakes that we are subject to. We seem to fancy, that our fear destroys our hope; and that we cannot hope unless we cease to fear. We take these two affections of the mind for mortal enemies, because their humours are so opposite. But, as that friendship is the greatest, which no difference  
of

of humour can divide : so, if we examine well the matter, we shall find, that fear and hope are such inseparable friends, they cannot possibly subsist without each other's company ; the separation of the one, is certainly the death and ruin of the other. Fear without hope degenerates into despair. Hope, without fear, is now no longer hope, but dangerous presumption. If now and then our minds are troubled and perplexed with fear ; we must not therefore presently conclude, that we have lost our hope : no, no ; we should have lost it, if we did not fear.

If the consideration of God's justice make a sinner tremble, he may lawfully desire to be delivered from the uneasiness, the pain and anxiety, which are the troublesome companions of his fear : but as for fear itself, it is an essential duty of a christian which cannot upon any terms, admit a dispensation. If the unsearchable designs and secrets of God's providence, are apt to fill our souls with apprehensions and fears ; this only helps us to perform the one  
half

half of our duty, without prejudicing the performance of the other; for the more we fear his justice, so much more we hasten to the shelter of his mercy.

This was the only refuge which the royal prophet had recourse to, Psalm lxxvii. 2. *In his days of trouble, when his soul refused to be comforted,* ver. 9. *Has God, says he, forgotten to be gracious? Has he shut up in anger, all his tender mercies?* ver. 8. *Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?* Oh no! his promise cannot fail: he can no more deceive, than be deceived. He has signed his promise more than once in scripture; and with a solemn oath, he has delivered it. A promise and an oath, which by commission from himself, his ministers are ordered to make use of.

When sinners are dejected with temptations of despair, Ezek. xxxiii. 10. When their transgressions and sins lye heavy upon them: when they begin to pine away with fear, and melancholy thoughts, of never being able to recover, what shall we say to comfort them?

Say

*Say to them, says the prophet, Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 14. If the wicked turn from his sin, if he repent, if he amend, 15. and walk in the statutes of life; he shall surely live; he shall not die, ver. 16.--- None of the sins he has committed, shall be ever mentioned to him; he shall hear of them no more; they shall not rise in judgment against him; God himself has promised, ver. 16. He shall surely live; he shall not die.*

*Say to them again; and say it boldly, in his name, whose justice makes them tremble, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Return, says he, return from your evil ways: Why will you die?*

*Why will you die? As who should say you may live if you will: I always am at hand, prepared to help you, if you heartily repent; you know you may recover if you have a mind to it; you know that if you die, it is because you will: As I live, I have no pleasure in your death, and therefore I have reason to complain, why will you die?*

Dear



Dear christians, what can we wish for more? we know that God can help us if he will. Whether he will or no, we need no farther proof than his own word; We have his word: we have his oath: he cannot take his own great name in vain, and he has sworn by his own life, *he has no pleasure in our death*; he does not of himself, desire it; but that

*O Beatos* we return and live, *O!* *quorum causa* we are happy; for whose *Deus Jurat!* fake God swears! But *O miseros, si* *O!* how miserable are *nec juranti* we; if, when God him-  
*Domino cre-* self is pleased to swear,  
*dimus* we cannot believe him.

If deeds are better proof than words, let us pass from what he has said, to what he has done. What has he done for sinners? Or rather, what has he not done? For them he came from Heaven; for them he lived a painful life on earth; for them he died upon the cross, Mat. 9. 13.

*I came not*, says he, *to call the just, but sinners*; he came, because it was nee

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cessa

cessary he should come : and therefore, for their sakes, for whom it was most necessary, for them he principally came. He never was so kind to any as to sinners. All his conversation was in their company, he made it his chief business to oblige them ; he followed them from place to place ; he thought of nothing else but how to gain their love ; he came with a design to inflame their hearts, he brought down fire from Heaven with him, and wished for nothing more, than that this fire might burn. His more than ordinary kindness was in all occasions so visibly remarkable, that he was taken notice of, and pointed at. The Pharisees were scandalized to see it. And in those days it was his great reproach, Mat. xi. 19. He was too much *a friend to publicans and sinners*. All this while, alas ! they little understood his business upon earth. His great compassion of their misery was the occasion of his coming. And since their indigence first brought him from above, it was no wonder the relieving of it was his chief employment

employment here below. He came as a physician to his dying friends, whom he most dearly loved; and therefore took most care, and was the most concerned for those who were the most dangerously sick. Thus did our God behave himself to sinners. Thus did he love his enemies, and treat them as his dearest friends. Thus did he live to serve them, till at length he died to save them.

St. Paul concludes from hence, we now have much more hope than ever, Rom. v. 10. *For if, when we were enemies, we then were reconciled to God; undoubtedly, we now have much more, being reconciled, we hope we shall be saved.* If then before he sent his only Son, God loved his enemies so dearly as to send him: we may well conclude, that since he came amongst us, since he interposed betwixt us and his Father's anger, since he died to reconcile us to him, Rom. viii. 34. since he *rose again* and at the *right hand* of his Father, is our advocate in Heaven, *making intercession for us*; surely now our humble supplications,

supplications, joined with his, and offered *in his name*, Jo. xiv. 15. will for his sake, be much more easily received. If then a contrite and humble heart was always so agreeable, he never would despise it; will he now refuse it? If the total sum of all the horrid crimes of mankind, during several ages; if the malice of them altogether, could not any way divert the course of ever-flowing mercy; if it could not hinder him from sending Jesus to redeem the world, how can we think the greatness of our sins can hinder him from having mercy on us, when we heartily repent?

Let us therefore, once for all, humbly confess and own our fault. The truth is, we are proud, and willing to excuse ourselves. We are willing to lay the blame of our impenitence at our Creator's door, and say, he will not pardon us, he will not give us grace, he will not save us: when, if we well examine, we shall find the blame is always ours; we will not repent, we will not comply with his  
grace

grace ; in a word, we will not be saved..

All we can say, in our defence is, that our sins are great, God will not look upon such grievous sinners as we are. I cannot say, they are not great, or that we are not grievous sinners : but, that therefore God will never look upon us, is as false as the word of God is true. He hates the sin, but loves

the sinner : he hates the  
*S. Aug.* leprosy, but loves the le-  
*Conf. lib.* per : and, as a merciful  
*8. cap. 3.* father, he rejoices more  
at the repentance of one sinner, than  
the innocence of ninety-nine, who do  
not stand in need of it,

Let us therefore, once again, hum-  
bly acknowledge and confess our fault.  
We only pretend our leprosy is so inve-  
terate, God will not suffer us to come  
into his sight, he will not cure us, he  
will not make us clean. The truth is,  
we are so negligent, so stupid, so in-  
sensible of our condition, that though  
we now and then are terrified to see the  
danger of it, nevertheless we will not



make our supplications to him as we ought, we will not be cured, we will not be cleansed.

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D A N G E R  
OF  
D E L A Y.

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S E C T. I.

*How apt we are to defer Repentance.*

**T**HAT we are all of us, some time or other, betwixt this and death, obliged under pain of eternal damnation, to rouse our sleepy souls from the bewitching lethargy of sin; it is an important truth, which no man can dispute. We all are fully satisfied, that if we live in the state of sin, if our affections are criminal, if our hearts are divided betwixt heaven and earth; we must, before we die, repent and mend,

mend, or we are all lost for ever. Luke xii. 3. *Unless we repent, we shall all perish.*

This we agree upon : our difficulty lies not in the knowing, but in the performing of our duty. When we discourse with ourselves in general terms, what is it we ought to do : the debate soon comes to an issue ; but as we descend to the particulars of when and how ; we come not so easily to a resolution, about the time. We suppose that we are able, at our pleasure, to change our hearts subdue our passions, and reform our lives : but our hearts, at present, are otherwise engaged ; our passions are youthful, and very importune ; our way of life, though none of the best, is suitable to the common maxims of the world, and what haste I pray, to do just now, what may as easily be done another time, when ever we please ? besides the present circumstances are very particular ; an abrupt disengagement would now go very much against the design: we had better, for a time content our passions and  
bring

bring them to a composition: when this or that business is over, that we may more freely attend to the work of our salvation, when our company changes, when we meet with a juncture of more favourable circumstances: Oh! then we will begin the new man, bid adieu to the follies of this world; and from that instant, date the beginning of our journey towards heaven.

Thus the colour of piety gives a reputation to the delusion: we cover the popular cheat, with an agreeable disguise: and betwixt gratifying our inclinations on the one side, with a criminal condescendence, and pacifying the remorses of our conscience, on the other side, with a plausible pretence of future amendment, at a more convenient time; we make virtue in appearance, subscribe to our vices, and counterfeit God's hand to one of the worst temptations of the Devil.

S E C T. II.

*How dangerous it is to defer Repentance.*

**I**T is clear, we are not masters and disposers of our time: only he, who was the first author of time, who now conserves it, and who will one day put a final period to all time: he, I say, and only he, disposes of it as he pleases.

Besides, the changing of our hearts is far above our single strength; we are not able, by ourselves, so much as to begin so great a work, how then shall we be able to perform it at our leisure, whensoever we please? St. Gregory assures us (and we know it well enough) Ho. 12. in Ev. that *God who promises to pardon us if we repent, has never promised us the time of our repentance.*

It is true, we cannot but confess (to the great shame of our ingratitude), that our Creator loves us far above our merit. If we look back from hence, as far as the first creation, and carry our serious thoughts through all the steps of providence, we meet with nothing

thing but remarkable instances, of his good wishes towards us. Nay, if we yet look farther back, from the first moment of this world into eternity, we find him before the beginning of all time, entertaining his thoughts with the premeditation of our welfare; and in the first page of his eternal accounts, we find the great design of man's redemption, that stupendous mystery of mercy and justice, the incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who held nothing so dear, no obligation so important, as our sanctification: even to the degree of laying down his life for the advantage of that sacred interest. See here the motives which we have, to think he loves us! yet give me leave to tell you, he is not so fond of us, but that he can be angry at us, when he finds his love neglected. Witness all miserable christian souls, who once were happy in the same testimonies of his affection; who thought as we do, to reform their lives at a convenient season; who supposed, as we do, that God's extraordinary grace would



would never fail to be at hand, whenever they pleased to have occasion for it. Alas! poor souls, they now are lodged in the flames of hell for all eternity; and knows too late, that though God never fails to bestow his extraordinary graces, where he finds a faithful correspondency of our endeavours with his merciful assistance; yet he often shuts his hand, if we withdraw ours. He does not first desert us; yet if deserted by us, it is no wonder if he treat us upon equal terms, and so desert us.

Wonder not, that God who is so infinitely good, can find in his heart to abandon thus a sinner, who stifles the remorses of his conscience, who resists the frequent inspirations which invite him to repentance, who has always something else to do when he thinks of his duty, always is so rude, so scornfully uncivil, in receiving all the embassies of peace, which heaven sends him; that every trifling object which salutes his fancy, every miserable creature, which a silly passion recommends

to him, is sure to have preference, and be the first admitted.

How often does God court us, when we are alone, as it were carefully managing that favourable occasion, when it may be presumed, we are at leisure for his entertainment? But, alas! we are perhaps never less alone, than when we are alone: the common enemy of mankind is then most busy to prevent the advantage of such a happy circumstance. How often he does apply himself to us when any sudden accident has crossed our inclinations, when we have been disappointed in our intrigues, when we begin to find our labour lost in the pursuit of what we hunted after, when we sit down angry, and affronted at the confusion of our mistake, almost ready to fall out with the world for having cheated us; then it is, that he takes hold of this conjuncture; begins in a loving manner to expostulate with us; to reprove us; how treacherous a friend we find the world to be; on the contrary, how constant and faithful a friend he has been to us, from all eternity to  
this

this moment; how ready he is, notwithstanding all that is past, to receive us with open arms into favour again, if we return sincerely to him. And how do we hearken to all this? Why, truly, it passed away like a little fit of melancholy; we were then in an ill humour; we are glad it is over; and so we think no more on it. Whatever God speaks to our hearts, is all out of doors: our hearts are shut against him, all the time, Apoc. iii. 20. *He stands at the door and knocks*; and we neglect him, letting him stand and wait our leisure; we approve the friendship of the world before his; and though we may have some slight thoughts of hearing him some other time, yet for the present, we flatly deny him entrance, and refuse him audience.

Let us now consider a little: what pitiful worms we are, who thus contemn the Almighty; who is he, whom we affront; what trifles we prefer before him; and we shall not wonder, if at length he leave us, and desert us, with a resolution never more to offer us these extraordinary favours, Jo. viii.

21. *I go away, says he, and you shall seek me, and you shall die in your sin.*



### SECT. III.

*Reasons why Delay is so dangerous.*

**T**HAT I may discover, yet more clearly, the extravagance of sinners, who defer the conversion of their hearts from time to time, upon a vain presumption of chusing their own time when they please; I suppose, as a fundamental principle, 1 Pet. v. 5. that *God gives grace to the humble, and resists the proud.*

He who values himself upon being wise enough in the management of his salvation; who neglects the time which God's great mercy offers him; who presumes he can, whenever he pleases, chuse the time of his conversion; such a person, if ever he approach the throne of grace, comes in a disposition directly opposite to reconciliation; he carries pride barefaced in the very front of him; and the address he presents,

is

is endorsed with the very same fault which he begs pardon for.

A true convert comes trembling, with a heart truly humbled under the omnipotent hand of an offended Majesty; and such a penitent will always find favour; a contrite and humble heart God will never despise; all his former offences will pass for nothing, Ezek. xxxiii. 16. *None of his sins he committed, shall be mentioned to him:* in the day of his conversion, his impiety shall never hurt him: what time soever God shall please to mark out to him, if he manage that he is secure.

But, if a sinner carelessly reject God's inspirations, and from time to time, neglect the opportunities he mercifully offers him; if he behave himself, as if he thought his time of reconciliation were entirely at his own disposing; and upon this account, when he thinks fit, presents himself before the throne of grace; his very coming in this manner is an act of pride, a pride by which he dangerously presumes upon a more than ordinary favour, such as he knows has



been denied to many thousands, who are damned for ever, for less sins than his, and less neglect of the Almighty; a pride which is the greatest provocation that can be imagined, in as much as it abuses all his infinite goodness, forbearance and patience, not only to the utmost degree of contempt, but even to an impudent assurance of obtaining mercy when we please, although we have so much, so often, and so long, contemned it. This is a sufficient reason, why God may abandon such proud penitents as often as he pleases: and this reason is attended with a sort of obligation (if a man may term it so), incumbent upon providence, if not always, at least generally, and for the most part, to treat them according to their merit.

This obligation arises from two titles. God is the Creator of man, and the Redeemer of sinful man. The first gives him the prerogative of being the supreme and universal Lord and Master of the universe; under which character, it belongs to him to give law to  
all

all the parts of it, and take such methods, as may with a smooth and easy, yet strong and steady influence, promote and carry on the great design of the creation. Hence comes the obligation of supporting the credit, and maintaining the authority of his government, which sinks immediately and falls to nothing, if his too great indulgence always tolerate the open violation of his precepts, joined with all the indignities, affronts, and insolencies, of a haughty subject, that will not be reclaimed but when he pleases, will not take the advantage of those favourable opportunities which are so often offered him, but defers the only necessary business of his life from time to time, upon a proud presumption, of being received at any hour whensoever he pleases. Nothing under heaven can in this occasion, keep up the spirit and vigour of discipline amongst us, and place the fear of God before our eyes, but a just and severe punishment, such as becomes the indignation of an angry God abused, affronted, and contemned ;

which is, to treat us as we treat him, leaves us as he finds us, and flatly refuse us audience, when we make supplications to him.

This motive, which arises from the title of Creator, is abundantly sufficient; but yet the title of Redeemer is a far more powerful inducement to the rigour of justice. The creation of the world was but a small expence: a word said, and the whole work done. But the redemption of sinful man, the extraction of him out of the profound abyss of sin and malice, was a more laborious master-piece of mercy and justice; it cost him his descent from heaven, a painful life for many years upon earth, and the last drop of his most precious blood upon the cross. Having redeemed us from the devil, at so dear a rate, and having paid the utmost price of our salvation, he has a strict right to the honour and reputation of his mercy, Isa. xlii. 8. He is *Lord of all, and his glory he will not give to another.* He is our Lord and Master; by redemption all of us are his; he has paid

paid the full discharge of our account; but he will not apply the value of this payment to those persons whose pride will either challenge the credit, or share it with him; he bestows it only where it may be evident, if not to all the world, at least to every sinner's conscience who receives the benefit, that nothing but the power of grace could work so wonderful a resurrection, and free him from the servitude of sin.

He who made our hearts, cannot but know the temper of our inclinations. He cannot but see, how partial and unequal we are in our judgments. If any thing be amiss with us, we presently begin to murmur and repine within ourselves, as if God only were the author of our failings. But, if we succeed in any thing that seems praiseworthy, either in the sight of God or man, we presently assume the reputation of it to ourselves. Our faith teaches us the contrary: and we seem to believe it. But yet, I know  
*S. Bern. de ord. vit. & mor. instit.*

into

the world with us, that vice which is the first we fight with, and the last we conquer, is so apt to work upon our judgment, that if we examine well, we cannot but observe, we always are a great deal more inclined to magnify our own endeavours, than to admire the power of grace. If God should never treat us as we merit; if he should never abandon those, who from his goodness take occasion to abuse it; we should grow insensible of our necessities; we should forget our obligations to the grace of our Redeemer; we should behave ourselves, as if we thought that *All is done by our high hand, and not by the assistance of our Lord*, Deut. xxxii. 27. This is one reason, and a just one, why he is obliged (as I may say) in honour, if not always, at least generally, and for the most part, to refuse them audience in a time of their own chusing, who during the time which he thought proper for their purpose, never would vouchsafe to hearken to him, Jo. viii. 21. *I go away*, says he, and  
you



*you shall seek me, and you shall die in your sins.*

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SECT. IV.

*That we ought to begin immediately,  
without Delay.*

HE who has promised pardon to those who repent, has never promised true repentance to those who defer it. A man must be a stranger to the ordinary course of providence, who does not know, that there are certain times in which our God is kinder and more favourable to us; when clouds of anger disappear, when heaven seems to smile upon us, and the Almighty seems to meet halfway the prayers and addresses of people. It is not that God is liable to any shadow of inconstancy: he always is inclined to mercy, and nothing but our sins can force him to the rigour of his justice. Sometimes he showers

down his graces in plentiful abundance; visits and inspires us with good thoughts, good inclinations to amend our lives; strongly and sweetly moves us; frequently and importunately presses and solicits us to true repentance. But, if we slight his favours, he withdraws them from us: mercy neglected and abused, gives place to justice: and all those great and extraordinary graces, which before abounded, are denied us that we may, by this means grow sensible of their necessity and our dependency, their power and our weakness.

*Christ. Di-*

*rectory. p. 2.*

*c. 7. Sect. 3.*

*& v. 35.*

‘What wise man is there in the world, who reading this will not fear the deferring of his conversion, though it were but for one day? who knows, whether this shall be the last day, or no, that ever God will call him? Prov. ch. i. God said, *I called, and you refused to come; I held out my hand, and you would not look towards me, and therefore I will forsake you in your extremity.* He does not

' not say, how many times he called,  
 ' or how long he held out his hand.  
 ' God says, I stand at *Ibid. n. 37.*  
 ' the door, and knock : *A. D. 1673.*  
 ' but he says not how  
 ' often. Almighty God is ready and  
 ' bountiful to knock and call; but yet,  
 ' he binds himself to no time or space,  
 ' but comes and goes at his pleasure.  
 ' And they who take not their time  
 ' when they are offered, are excuseless  
 ' before his justice, and do not know,  
 ' whether ever it shall be offered them  
 ' again or no: for that this thing is  
 ' only in the will and knowledge of  
 ' God alone; who takes mercy where  
 ' it pleases him best, and is bound to  
 ' none. And when the prefixed time  
 ' of calling is once past, woe be to that  
 ' party; for a thousand worlds [per-  
 ' haps] will not purchase it again.'

This reason is abundantly sufficient,  
 to make us manage carefully the work  
 of our *salvation with fear and trem-  
 bling; and humble ourselves under the  
 powerful band of God, Phil. ii. 12. 1  
 Pet. v. 6. without pretending to any  
 absolute*

absolute security of our admittance whensoever we please. We are certainly damned, if we never ask pardon; probably it may be yet time enough, if we ask it now: and in concurrence of a certain ruin on the one side, with a probability of a safety on the other, no wise man will lose time to deliberate upon the choice.

Some will say, perhaps, it is a severe case, to renounce all worldly affections, and deny them what is most dear to them; to declare war against the most violent passions, and to undergo the hardship of perpetual service in the engagement; if we have no absolute security of making peace when ever we desire it. Had we an assurance of our pardon, whensoever we ask it, it were some encouragement to undertake a thorough reformation of our lives. But, to renounce all, upon a hazard of gaining nothing, is too cool an invitation to encounter so painful and laborious a task.

*O man*, says St. Paul to the Romans, ch. ix. 20. *who art thou, that thus repliest*

*pliest against God?* Who are you, that dare presume to article with him, in this manner? Is it not enough, to have so frequently transgressed his laws, so much contemned his menaces, so long abused his patience? Is it not enough, to have idolized the objects of your passion? to have set up your single self, in opposition to all the dictates of duty and obedience? to have affronted the omnipotent hand, which (had not his mercy held it,) had long since sunk your miserable soul to the abyss of hell? Is not this enough, unless the same pride which began your misery, accompany also the petition of your pardon? Remember, that *God resists the proud, and gives grace only to the humble,* 1 Pet. v. 5. Remember, that it is a very proud beggar, who will not ask an alms, except he be assured before-hand of receiving it: and, that God is so far from receiving that insolent request of such a proud petitioner, that (on the contrary,) he openly declares, he hates him, Eccl. xxv. 4. *My soul,* says he, *hates a proud beggar.* Ah



Ah Christians! we must (if we hope for salvation,) we must come in another disposition. We must not loose time upon the debate, whether or no we have a certain prospect of success, Phil. ii. 12. We must *work our salvation with fear and trembling*, 1 Pet. v. 6. and *Humble ourselves under the powerful hand of God*. In this conjuncture, we have nothing else to do, but flie in all haste to the *Throne of Grace*, Heb. iv. 16. Every moment is precious; every moment of delay encreases the danger.

The Prodigal Son, whose imitation our Saviour recommends to us, proposing him as a great example of an humble penitent, did not loose time in studying whether his father would receive him or not; he did not beforehand enquire into his father's humour, how he stood affected to him; whether he was ready to admit him; or determined never more to look upon him: But, immediately, at his first coming to himself, he said, Luke xv. 17, 18. *I will rise, and go to my Father, and say to him, Father,*

*Father, I have sinned.* So far was he from any absolute assurance of his pardon, and so sensible of his unworthiness; he did not so much as offer to demand a perfect reconciliation, but left himself entirely to his father, to dispose of him, and do with him what he pleased, ver. 19, *Father, I am not worthy to be called your Son.*

Alas ! what can we do in this condition ? We must redouble our prayers which we have heretofore so often huddled over, with as much indifference and coldness, as if we were afraid lest God should hear us, and assist us with his grace to *take up our cross, deny ourselves, and follow him*, Mat. xvi. 24.

If after a month, a year, or more, we find no great effect of mercy, we must still persevere firm in our endeavours : the more we fear God's anger, the faster we must fly to the protection of his goodness. We must not sink under the apprehensions of our reprobation, but without disputing our destiny, we must resolve either to obtain pardon, or die in the demanding of it.

If

If the Almighty seem to take no notice of us ; if he seem, as it were, to command us out of his sight, we have nothing else to say, John vi. 68. but, *Lord, whither shall we go ?* what way is there to fly from thine anger, but by the speediest recourse we possibly can make to the shelter of thy infinite goodness ? We know we deserve an eternal banishment from thy presence : we know, we often have refused thee audience : we know, it was our common answer, Prov. iii. 28. *Go, and come again* another time : and therefore, we know we have no reason to complain, if now we are forsaken and abandoned by thee. But, this is only what we deserve ; it is only what we justly fear : thou nevertheless, commandest us to hope otherwise ; and it is in compliance with this command, Rom. iv. 18. that we *hope even against hope*. We come not to dispute about our heaven or our hell ; we come not to capitulate upon the articles of our salvation ; we only fear as we have reason, and hope as we ought ; so that, setting aside the whole solicitude

solicitude of that affair, we leave it entirely to thy mercy. We come with a contrite and an humble heart, full of nothing but a sincere sorrow for all our past offences, joined with a hearty resolution, never to offend thee any more, except it may be an offence for sinners, such as we are, to continue in thy presence ; which cannot be : no, no ; though we should see thy sword of justice drawn against us, and thy omnipotent hand stretched out to strike us dead at thy feet, we will not quit the place, Job xiii. 15. *Although thou killest us, we will still trust in thee.*

This is the humble heart which charms our God ; the heart which he cannot refuse, Psal. l. *Such a contrite, such an humble heart, He never will despise.* This is the only disposition that can make amends for the abuse of so much goodness ; and for the deferring our conversion so long, upon a proud presumption of amendment when we pleased. Such an humble heart as this, gives God no reason to be jealous of his honour : his hand appears manifest-  
ly

ly in the management and preparation of it, Exod. viii. 19. *The finger of God is here.* Such a convert, as this, will never challenge any share in the honour of his conversion; but, admiring the benefit, will resign the honour, and humble himself so much the more in his presence who made him what he is. But God will always have the honour of the work; he will be merciful when he thinks fit, and not allow proud man to dispose of his mercy! he will take his own time, and confound the presumptuous pride of those, who (as if they were God's master, rather than his servants,) make no doubt but they can chuse a time convenient, when they please.

Sinners, deceive not yourselves. Think not that God is always equally disposed to hear us, whensoever we appoint our time of audience. He will not suffer us to pretend to the honour of beginning our conversion, and challenging his greatest graces at our leisure. It is true he died to save us: but though he died for our benefit, he died  
for



for God's honour; and will not part with any share of this honour, to humour a proud penitent, Isa. xlii. 8. He is *Lord* of all, and his glory he will not give to another, 1 Pet. v. 5. He resists the proud, and only to the humble he gives grace in this world, glory in the next.

A  
C O N T R I T E  
H E A R T.

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S E C T I.

*Sorrow for our Sins.*

*Anton. das* ‘ O My God ! God of  
*Chagas.* ‘ my Soul, my life,  
‘ my heart, and all that is within me !  
‘ I have sinned, O my God ; I have  
‘ offended thee ; I have done ill before  
‘ the face of heaven and earth. Neither  
‘ the stars of heaven, nor the grains of  
‘ sand upon the earth, are equal to the  
‘ boundless numbers of my grievous  
‘ sins.

Ah my dear God ! my Maker, my  
Preserver, my Redeemer, and my  
only Benefactor, how it grieves me to  
have so offended thee ! ‘ I am much  
more

‘ more troubled at my great ingratitude,  
‘ than at the greatness of the torments  
‘ I deserve.”

O that I could bewail with tears of blood, the base unworthiness of my behaviour to my only most obliging, most endearing, most deserving friend, a friend who always loved me, even when I loved my silly humours, and his miserable creatures more than him, who always loved me, even when I was his most ungrateful enemy; and notwithstanding all, still made me whatsoever I was, still gave me whatsoever I had, and still invited me, nay, even courted me, with daily inspirations of his grace, to love him above all things. O that my eyes were living fountains of continual repentance, to bewail my base unworthiness.

And yet, although my bleeding heart should burst out at my eyes, my grief would never be equal to my grievous sins; the guilt of which is infinite, and infinitely greater than I am able to conceive. Though I should weep with tears of blood in every corner of the  
earth

earth where I have sinned; all that would never wash away the guilt or scandal of my crimes. There is nothing but the bleeding sacrifice of the unspotted lamb of God; there is nothing but the blood of JESUS dying for my sake upon the cross: there is nothing else can reconcile me to the sovereign majesty which I have so provoked; there is nothing else can wash out the deep stains of my unspeakable ingratitude.

This is that mercy of my God, which the admiring world has reason to call great; that mercy which is truly great, not only in itself, but great to all that are partakers of it. *Psal. 50. Have mercy on me O God, according to thy great mercy. Wash my poor soul from its iniquity, and cleanse it from its sins, sprinkle me only with the blood of Jesus, and shall be cleansed: wash me with it, and I shall be whiter than snow. Cast me not away from thy Face, but look upon a contrite and an humble heart which (for the sake of thy beloved son, with whom thou art well pleased, Matt. xvii. 5.)*

xviii. 5.) I hope, thou wilt not despise;  
but, that thou wilt have mercy on me, O  
God, according to thy great mercy.

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## SECT. II.

### *Resolutions of Amendment.*

**I** Have said, Now I begin, Psalm  
lxxvi. Alas! how often have I said so,  
and as often broke my word! and,  
what hope have I now to keep it, more  
than any other time? When I renew  
the doleful memory of my relapses,  
how I tremble at the very thought! to  
think how often in a lukewarm fit of  
piety, I have imagined, I was now be-  
ginning to amend my life; and yet,  
how soon, how easily, how shameful-  
ly, hath every sudden passion, every  
sinful inclination, every silly humour  
overcome my best and firmest resolu-  
tions! Proud as I was, I wondered al-  
ways at my weakness, and could scarce  
believe it though I saw it. Proud as I  
was,



was, still went on in the same road ; still fancied it was easy to reform when I resolved upon it ; and still excused myself, by laying all the fault upon my neighbours, my employments, or some other circumstances of my life. And yet whatsoever business I have been employed in; whatsoever circumstances have attended me through all the several changes of my fortune ; I have always been the same frail creature, always unequally unfaithful to my word. What hope then have I now to keep it. more than any other time ?

Must I despair ? yes, yes : It is absolutely necessary for me to despair of my own strength, that I may seriously begin to hope in nothing else but him, who *gives grace to the humble, and resists the proud*, 1 Pet. v. 5. And may I by his grace persevere all my life, improving each day more and more, in this despair, which is the reason why, I hope more now than any other time.

O that I had long since despaired entirely of my own sufficiency, and placed my confidence in nothing but the powerful

powerful assistance of his grace; I should not then have been so negligent, so openly exposed on every side, to the continual surprizes of my passions. I should then have carefully employed the precious moments of my time, either in studying how to meet my several dangers, or forecasting how to avoid them. I should then have prayed as heartily, as men do in a storm; who every moment fear to sink, and every moment lift their trembling hands and weeping eyes to heaven; the same angry heaven, whence they justly apprehend their fatal ruin. Ah my God! how seldom have I prayed so! And how often have I asked thy grace, as carelessly as if I had no need of it.

My resolutions, like my prayers hitherto have only been in general terms; that now I would reform my life; I would no longer be a slave to passion and humour; I would now begin to be a saint; and, O! how I have been ashamed to think of all my follies! Alas! This very pride which made me thus ashamed, was that which made  
H me

me fancy, it was an easy matter to amend; and therefore made me careless in observing the particular occasions of my greatest sins, the remedies which ought to be applied, and the impediments which ought to be removed. But since the sad experience of my weakness makes me wiser, I am now resolved, it shall be the chief business of my life, to watch and study all the motions of my heart; what passions are predominant; what inclinations second them; by what approaches they gained ground; and by what means, in this or that particular occurrence, they may be resisted, weakened, and subdued.

A master-work-man needs but now and then apply his rule, because his habit guides his skilful hand. But I, unskilful as I am, who only now begin the necessary art of living well, and have so many years contracted an ill habit of neglecting all those holy precepts; I must now, not only in my morning recollection, carefully foresee each danger I am like to meet with in  
the

the day ; but frequently renew those pious resolutions ; in all occasions consult the eternal truth which came from heaven to instruct me ; and examine seriously, if the employment of my thoughts, words, actions, and desires, be suitable to so divine a rule.

All this I am resolved upon, in presence of my God, and the whole court of heaven. Help me, all ye blessed spirits, Luke xv. 7. who are joyful witnesses of these my holy resolutions ; assist me now to make an humble offering of them all, *before the throne of grace*, Heb. iv. 16. and join your prayers with mine, to beg a blessing for them ; without which, although I daily water them with penitential tears, they never will encrease and bring forth fruit. I have said ; now I begin. Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy, Psal. lxxvi. 11. *For such a change comes only from the right hand of the highest.*

A N  
H U M B L E  
H E A R T.

S E C T. I.

*The Necessity and Advantage of Humility,*

S. Aug. lib. de ver. rel. **A**LL our Saviour's life, and conversation upon earth, was a continual instruction for the modelling of ours. But above all things, he particularly recommended to us the example of his great humility: *Learn of me, says he, because I am humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls, Matt. xi. 29*

The necessity of this incomparable virtue, is so great, that it is impossible, without it, to make any progress into a spiritual life. Our pride corrupts and



‘ and ruins all our virtuous actions, unless humility begin, continue, and conclude them.

‘ St. Gregory says, true *Rodr.*  
‘ virtue never grows in any *gues.*  
‘ soul, but when it is nourished by its proper root, *ch. 2.*  
‘ which is humility. This plain comparison expresses very well its nature, and its properties. 1. A flower fades and withers when it is parted from its root. 2. The root is never better than when hidden in the earth, and trampled under foot. 3. A tree is longer lived and yields more fruit, according as the root of it is deeper, and lies lower under ground.

‘ How much our faith depends upon humility, the *Rodr.*  
‘ apostle tells us, when he speaks *ch. 3.*  
‘ of casting down imaginations,  
‘ 2 Cor. x. 5. every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God; and captivating every thought to the obedience of Christ. Man’s reason is but weak, and subject to mistake; and therefore a submissive spirit is re-

' quired; the want of which, has been  
 ' the first beginning of all heresies, and  
 ' verified St. Pauls prediction, 2 Tim.  
 ' iii. 1, 2, 3, 7. ' That in the last  
 ' days, dangerous times will come, be-  
 ' cause men will be proud; despisers of  
 ' good people; and ever learning, but  
 ' never coming to the knowledge of truth.

' The same humility which guides  
 ' our faith, encourages our  
*Rodr. c.* ' hope; because the more  
 10. 11. ' we fear our weakness, and  
 ' distrust in our own strength,  
 ' the more we have recourse to God,  
 ' in whom we place our confidence;  
 ' and thus, 2 Cor. xii. 10. *when we*  
 ' *are weak*, says the apostle, *we are*  
 ' *strong*, that is to say, when once we  
 ' rightly understand ourselves, and be-  
 ' ing thoroughly convinced of our in-  
 ' firmity, we seriously begin to hope  
 ' in nothing, but the assistance of God's  
 ' Grace: Then it is that he himself  
 ' begins to take in hand, the manage-  
 ' ment of our affairs; provides for us  
 ' in all our spiritual wants; supports  
 ' and guides us, by a special providence  
 ' in

‘ in our pious undertakings. It is with  
‘ us, as it is with beggars, who expose  
‘ their ulcers and their miseries; the  
‘ more they lay them open in the pub-  
‘ lic view, the more they move our  
‘ pity, and obtain more alms of chari-  
‘ table persons: So the more sincerely  
‘ we confess, and with profound humi-  
‘ lity acknowledge our extreme neces-  
‘ sities, exposing them in presence of  
‘ our God, the more we move him to  
‘ compassionate our miserable state, and  
‘ to bestow upon us more abundantly  
‘ the riches of his grace. Humility,  
as it encourages our hope, so it im-  
proves our charity. An humble man  
perpetually considering his innumerable  
faults and imperfections, the more he  
sees his great unworthiness, the more  
he wonders at God’s patience, and is  
more inclined to love his Goodness  
above all things. Nothing  
makes me better under-  
stand how good God is,  
than when I see with how  
much patience he endures a man, who  
is not able to endure himself. It is he  
who

*P. Crasset.**T. 2. Con.*

14.

who is offended; I am the offender. I all wickedness; and he all holiness. As wicked as I am, I cannot endure myself: as holy as he is, he suffers me with patience. I only see a small part of my faults, and hate myself; he sees them all and yet he does not cease to love me. I have such an horror of myself, when I consider how inconstant, and how frail I am; and yet I cannot perceive that God has any horror of me. On the contrary, the more I humbly own my wickedness, the more obliging and endearing proofs he gives me of insuperable goodness.

*Rod. ch. 3.* Our humility preserves and guards our chastity. St. Bernard does not fear to say, that even the purity of the blessed virgin herself, had never been agreeable to God without it. Besides, it is not

*Corn. a.* only necessary to preserve  
*Lap. in. c.* our chastity; but is the best  
*1. ad Rom.* and most effectual remedy that can be, to procure it. Luxury is the punishment of pride, and chastity the triumph of humility. St. Hierom says,

says, 'it is hard to find a heretic that loves chastity; although in his discourses he may seem to praise it, and pretend to practise it.' The reason is, because God gives grace only to the humble, and resists the proud, 1 Pet. v. 5. and where there is no grace, there is no chastity, but all concupiscence. Hence comes the common saying of our novelists, that chastity is impossible; and it is no wonder that they think so; for it is so to the proud and graceless, who can never be truly chaste, till they are truly humble. They are *given up by God to all uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts*, Rom. i. 24. and it is but just, that if the soul refuses due submission to God, the body should be found by his permission as untractable and disobedient to such a soul. Because, says St. Gregory, "by pride they prefer themselves before men; by luxury they soon become like beasts." A man might easily go *Rodr. ch. 3.* through all other virtues, and observe humility, as necessary for the acquiring and preserving of them all.



all. But, what has been already said, suffices to convince us, that the most compendious method of aspiring to perfection, is to make it our chief business to be truly humble.

*P. Crasset.* It is enough to add, that  
*T. 1. Sund.* all our virtues, and good  
*3. de l'Avent.* actions, without humility, will never save us; and that all our sins and imperfections, with true humility, will never damn us; for as soon as ever we are truly humble, all our vices leave us, and immediately all virtues take possession of our heart. My soul! why are we then discouraged? why do we despair? why are we now and then so melancholy, when we think of all our imperfections and faults? if therefore we have reason to despair, have we not therefore reason to be humble? let us be so then, and we shall have no longer any reason to despair. Let us but humble ourselves in the presence of our God, we shall soon obtain all that we have not; we shall be able to do all that we cannot; and we shall receive all that we deserve not. You cannot

cannot fast: at least you can humble yourself. You cannot weep for your sins? Humble yourself, because you cannot. You have not time enough, nor health enough, to say much prayers. However, you may be as humble every jot, as if you had. Do what you can, you always pray with much distraction. Be content, and humble. You are now and then surpris'd, and fall into some sin. Have patience: take more care another time, and be more humble ever after.

*An humble heart God will never despise,*  
Psal. 1. And is not this enough to shew us the necessity and great advantage of humility? How comfortable is the thought of it to them whose want of health, or other circumstances, will not suffer to make use of corporal austerities, in satisfaction for their sins! What comfort is it to them, to reflect, that still they have a refuge left them in the sanctuary of this virtue. It is the only one they have, if we believe an ancient father of the Church. Who-  
ever

*St. John*  
*Clima. Re-*  
*capitul Ar.*  
35.

ever has committed grievous sins, and has a body weak and sickly; let him tread the footsteps of humility: in all things, let him follow where the spirit and the impulse of that virtue lead him: it is the only way he has to save his soul.

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## S E C T. II.

### *First Degree of Humility.*

*Rod. ch. 5.* **T**HE first degree, is to have a mean opinion of ourselves, to think ourselves contemptible, and judge that we deserve to be despised by all the world. The knowledge of ourselves, our weakness, and our misery, is no humility; but only is the necessary means to come to this degree of it.

A person truly humble, always has before his eyes his own defects and imperfections; in *Rod. ch. 3.* others, he considers chiefly the perfections and virtues which he finds; and thus he always is persuaded that his neighbours

neighbours are much better, and more perfect than himself. He loves them with respect and tenderness. He is not angry at his being valued less than they, but glad to see them all preferred before him.

His sins, which are ever before him, make him sensible, that he deserves the worst of punishments: and therefore, whatsoever happens to him, he esteems it infinitely less than his injury deserves. He never thinks himself affronted. Whatsoever wrong is done him, he receives it as a favour, in comparison of what he has just reason to expect. He suffers all, in silence, upon this account; and far from breaking out into complaints, he only calls to mind that humble saying of the prophet Micheas vii. 9. *I will bear the indignation of my God, because I have sinned against him.*

The hardest measure we can suffer in this life; the greatest *Rod. ch. 7.* and the most severe humiliations we can think of, are incomparably less than what is due to any single crime, which we commit against the majesty of God. Can we imagine, all the world is able to dishonour him too much, who has dishonoured God himself? and is it not just, that having slighted and neglected his Creator, he himself should be despised by all, and live for

ever after in disgrace? remember, that a sinner is a *Child of wrath*, Ephes. ii. 3. an enemy of God, a monster of deformity, condemned to everlasting flames: remember this, and you will shrink below the feet of all the world; because you will then be convinced, that howsoever you are humbled and oppressed, a man who has but once offended God, deserves to suffer more.

Although my conscience accuse me not, *Rodr. Ibid.* *Though I know nothing of myself*, says the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 4. *yet I am not hereby justified; but he that judges me is God.* When we consider well, how doubtful our condition is, and how we always are uncertain of being justified: This, this alone, without all other motives, which are numberless, is of itself abundantly sufficient to humble us. What Christian is there, that would dare to shew his face? or man, that would not rather wish to sink into the bowels of the earth, to hide himself? If this reflection once had made a deep impression in his mind, my crimes are certain, but my pardon is uncertain; nothing can be more uneasy to a soul, that would be saved, than this uncertainty. But yet there is nothing in the world of greater use for the acquiring and preserving of humility. There is nothing can restrain us



more from censuring our neighbours, or despising even those who seem the greatest sinners, than to think, that we ourselves are far from having any certainty of being in the state of grace; and that this very moment we may be for ought we know, in equal danger of the everlasting flames of hell.

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### S E C T. III.

#### *Second Degree of Humility.*

**T**HE second degree, is when we love to be neglected, and desire to be despised. As hard as *Rod. ch. 13.* it appears, if we were once well grounded in the first degree, the way would then be short and easy to the second. If we had but once a mean opinion of ourselves; if once we truly thought ourselves contemptible; if once our judgment were convinced, that we deserved to be despised by all the world; it would not then be difficult to suffer their contempt, we then should even wish for such occasions of improving our humility: they would be always very welcome to us, and afford us, every day, new joy and consolation. 'It is certain,' says St. Bonaventure, 'that we naturally love to see our sentiments

' approved, and our opinions followed.  
 ' Which if it be true, as our experience  
 ' too often teaches us, why are we so un-  
 ' easy, when we see our neighbours un-  
 ' dervalue us? It is questionless, because  
 ' we are not, in our judgment, thorough-  
 ' ly convinced that we deserve to be de-  
 ' spised; for if we were, we should be  
 ' glad to see our neighbours follow our  
 ' opinions.

The dispositions which make way to  
 this degree, are, 1. to shun  
*Rod. ch. 14.* as much as may be, all occa-  
 sions of praise. 2. To suffer patiently the  
 humours and insults of others. 3. To take  
 no pleasure in our being celebrated and  
 admired. 1. The avoiding all occasions

*Ibid.* of praise, is recommended to us by  
 the great example of our Saviour,  
 and the universal practice of the saints.  
 Our Saviour fled from those who thought  
 to chuse him king. He shewed his glory  
 on mount Thabor, to no more than three  
 of his disciples, and immediately charged  
 them not to say a word of it. Whensoever  
 his great charity appeared in doing mira-  
 cles, his great humility appeared no less  
 in his commanding secrecy.

Humility affects not to appear in her  
 own likeness. She forbears  
 expressions which discover *S. Fr. Sales.*  
 her. She desires, not only *p. 3. c. 5.*

to conceal all other virtues, but particularly to conceal herself.

It is a dangerous thing to *P. Crasset.*  
speak of ones self, either well *T. 1. Mar.*  
or ill, if well, it is to appear *3. de l' A-*  
deserving; if ill, it is to ap- *vent.*  
pear humble.

An humble man had rather hear ano-  
ther say, 'that he is mise- *S. Fr. Sales.*  
rable inconsiderable, good *P. 5. c. 5.*  
for nothing,' than be heard  
to say it of himself. At least, he never  
contradicts it. Whosoever says it, he be-  
lieves it firmly, and is therefore glad  
that others are of his opinion.

2. If we seriously consi- *Rod. ch. 14.*  
der, that the esteem of  
men, is generally, if not always an occa-  
sion of presumption and pride; and that  
the saints themselves, who by God's grace,  
were more secure from danger, always  
fled from such temptation, even with aver-  
sion and horror; we should certainly con-  
clude, that whatsoever may contribute to  
the humbling of us, and inducing us to have  
a mean opinion of ourselves, should be re-  
ceived with patience, and embraced as  
useful means of purchasing, preserving,  
and encreasing our humility. The oppor-  
tunities of practising this virtue, are so fre-  
quent every day, that if we did but care-  
fully forecast to profit by them, we might

almost make it our continual exercise.

*B. III. ch.* ' It happens, says the devout Kempis, that what is  
49.

' pleasing to others, shall go  
' well forward; that which others say,  
' shall be heard; what thou sayest, shall  
' be nothing regarded; others shall ask,  
' and shall receive; thou shall ask, and  
' shall not obtain; others shall be great in  
' the praise of men; but of thee there  
' shall be no speech: To others, this or  
' that shall be committed; but thou shalt  
' be accounted fit for nothing. At this  
' nature is apt sometimes to be troubled;  
' and it is much, if thou art humble enough  
' to hear it patiently with silence.

*Ibid.* 3. To be charmed so little  
with esteem and honour, as to  
take no pleasure in them, is a third step  
to the height of this degree; much harder  
than the other two. For as St. Austin  
very well observes, ' although it may be  
' very easy for a man to live without  
' praise, when it is denied; is hard enough  
' for any man to take no pleasure in it,  
' when it is freely offered him. A proud  
' man, says St. Gregory, rejoices even  
' when he knows that his admirers are  
' mistaken in him; for he cares not what  
' his life is in the sight of God, but only  
' values the appearance of it in the sight  
of men. And therefore he is puffed up

‘ with the least applause : he fancies, he  
 ‘ has reaped the fruit of his endeavours :  
 ‘ he desires no more : he aims at nothing  
 ‘ else.’ But on the contrary, an humble  
 man is so averse from the applause of men,  
 that he is uneasy with it. He is afraid,  
 there is no real ground for it ; or else he  
 fears the loss of his reward in Heaven, by  
 receiving of it here, and trembles at the  
 apprehension of exchanging, for a little  
 popular esteem, the crown of everlasting  
 glory, which he hopes for. Solomon  
 says, Prov. vii. 21. *As gold is tried by  
 the furnace, so is a man by his praise.*  
 ‘ St. Gregory adds, if he grow vain by  
 ‘ hearing it, he is like false gold which  
 ‘ suffers by the fire ; but if the hearing  
 ‘ of it makes him tremble, least it may  
 ‘ be prejudicial to his soul before the  
 ‘ sovereign judge ; it is like a fire which  
 ‘ only serves to purify, and give him a  
 ‘ new lustre.’ We should be so ground-  
 ed in the knowledge of ourselves, that  
 when we are commended, we may always  
 have before our eyes, our base unworthi-  
 ness ; and be so much the more ashamed  
 to think, we are so far from being what  
 we seem to be ; that we fall short of be-  
 ing, even what we should be.

By these three steps we  
*Rod. ch. 15.* come at last to the degree, of



loving and desiring to be undervalued and despised: we become, not only humble in our judgment, but in our heart. The first degree, which is humility of judgment, was not to be found in Jesus Christ, as St. Bernard well observes; because he knew himself too well, to have a mean opinion of himself, or think himself contemptible, or judge that he deserved to be despised by all the world. But the second degree, the true humility of heart, was the humility of our Redeemer. He took pleasure in descending and becoming man: he loved to be neglected, scorned, and ridiculed: he heartily desired to undergo all injuries, insults, and outrages. Behold the example of our master. See the lesson which he came to teach us, Matt. xi. 29. *Learn of me*, says he, *because I am humble of heart.*

A true disciple of Christ, is *Ibid.* dead to all things in this world; he hates it, and detests it; he desires not to be valued and esteemed in it, but embraces all humiliations with the self-same passion, which worldly persons have for honour and esteem; and is as glad to meet with all occasions of appearing inconsiderable and contemptible, as they are overjoyed to meet with opportunities of seeming great.

To know if we are true disciples of our master, and have perfectly acquired this virtue; *Rodr. ch. 16.*

we must, by this rule, examine well the disposition of our heart, and see if we rejoice as much at being undervalued and despised, as others do, at being honoured and applauded.

This maxim is the touchstone of humility. For it is agreed *Ibid.* upon by all, that virtue is imperfect in us, till we practise it with satisfaction and pleasure. If we find the least repugnance in the practice, when occasion serves, and use much preparation to surmount the difficulty of it, it is indeed the way to acquire such virtue, but it also is a certain mark we have not yet acquired it in perfection. A master of an art, as Aristotle says, has such a habit of it, that he uses no deliberation, but performs the operations of it with such ease, he scarce knows what he is doing, when he does his work. And philosophers tell us, that in surprising accidents, we act not by reflection, but by habit; for which reason, it is in vain to examine what our inclinations are (and whether we are truly humble or no), by what we do with preparation and leisure; we must carefully

examine what we suddenly are apt to do without deliberation.

*Rodr. ch.* However by this examen we observe, that notwithstanding our endeavours to improve, we frequently are importuned, and sometimes overcome by pride and vanity; if we are yet so far from taking pleasure in the practice of humility, that we are hardly able to support in silence the uneasiness we suffer in it. Let not this discourage us; but on the contrary, the more we see our weakness let it humble us the more; and let us learn from thence, to use our utmost diligence, in laying a more firm foundation of christian humility, which is humility of heart. It is not a thing impossible. For by the grace of God we may be able, says St. Austin, not only to imitate the example of the saints, but also of the sovereign master of the saints. He invites us all to imitate his virtues; and can we fancy, he invites us to a thing impossible? *Learn of me*, says he, *because I am humble of heart*. And, St. Hierom very well observes, that those words of our Saviour, Matt. xix. 21. *If thou wilt be perfect, come and follow me*, are a manifest conviction that by his grace, (which always is at hand,) we have it in our power, to be perfect, if we will.

## S E C T. IV.

*An Objection answered.*

**I**F charity incline us to desire our neighbour's good, and to contribute what we can to their salvation, why should our humility desire, that all the world may undervalue us? Without their thinking well of us (in some capacity, or other) we shall never do them any good; they never will confide in us, they will not hearken to us; we shall have no credit with them. Is it not therefore reasonable, even by the rule of common charity that we should rather seek their kindness and esteem, than their aversion and contempt.

*Ibid.* St. Gregory answers: It is one thing to desire our neighbours esteem; another, to rejoice at his profit. It is a crime to covet reputation for its own sake, and rejoice at being great in the opinion of men. But yet, to wish as much of it as may be necessary for so good an end as that of serving souls, and gaining them to Christ, is an effect of charity. And thus, it is lawful to desire our neighbours good opinion and esteem, so far as may enable us to do them good, because we thus desire it only for their service, and the greater glory of our God.

with a sincere and total disengagement from the charms of pride and vanity. If any man, who naturally hates a potion, or a pill, upon occasion procures it, and desires to take it; we may be assured, that such a man takes medicine, not for medicine sake, but purely for his health. So when a man, who by an extraordinary grace of the Almighty, hates the applause and honour of this world; when such a man procures, desires, and manages with care the good opinion of men, because, it may be useful to him in their service; we may be assured, he only seeks God's honour, not his own.

However this great truth is generally much abused; and under *Ibid.* the pretence of it, we only cover the ambition and disguise our vanity: We covet honours, seek preferments, and intrude ourselves into employments, letting slip no opportunity of being or appearing great; and all this while, we plead it is only charity, to qualify us for the better service of our neighbours. We have therefore need of no small circumspection to discern the cheat. The way to know it, says St. Gregory, is to examine all occasions, where our reputation is a thing indifferent, and useless to our neighbour. If in these, we care not for the good opinion of men, we may suppose, that



When we are concerned for it, it is only for our neighbour's sake, and not our own.

*Ibid.* St. Gregory, thus unties the knot, but St. Francis outs it with more ease, and much more clearly takes away the difficulty.

Whatsoever the occasions are, *Ibid.* he roundly answers; that our charity begins at home; that if it inclines us to desire our neighbours spiritual good; with much more reason, it inclines us to desire our own: that if our reputation may be useful to our neighbour, our disgraces and humiliations (incurred without our fault) may prove more beneficial to ourselves. If when I preach, says he, or when I practise any virtue, which is edifying, I am pleased with praises, which endanger my salvation; because their good opinion of me, helps them to improve by my instruction, and example. How much reason have I, for my own sake to rejoice a great deal more when (having done my best) I still am undervalued and despised; because, by this means, I myself am more acceptable to God, and more secure of my eternal happiness.

Our Saviour himself, whose charity inclined him to descend *See Rodr.*

from heaven, and to sacrifice *ch.* 29. his life for sinners; knew that many unbelieving souls were lost by undervaluing and despising him; he knew that many millions of them would have been converted, if they had admired and honoured him as he deserved; and yet, he never sought for worldly honour as a means to save them; but although their souls were dear to him, his honour was not. *As he came from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him,* Joh. vi. 38. So he came to seek the honour of his Father, not his own, Joh. viii. 49 50. *I honour my Father,* says he, *I seek not my own glory.* It is enough, that whilst I only seek his honour, he takes care of mine; and that although I never seek my own, yet *there is one that always seeks and judges it,* ver. 50. and always will be sure to do me justice. Let us follow the example of our Saviour, let us make it the chief business of our life, to do the will of him that sent us, not our own. Let us honour our Father in heaven. Let his honour only be the object of our care, and never let us mind our own, but rest content, that he himself takes care of it. Let no appearance of our neighbours profit, cheat us into an ambition of being popular; but let us faithfully, in all things, do our

duty, for the love and honour of our God; and as for mens opinion of us, let us leave it to his providence. His honor here below, is left (as I may say) to our discretion; he commits it to our care: he forces not our liberty, but only offers the assistance of his grace, and let us honour him, and serve him as we please. Shall God thus trust his honour in so bad a hand as ours? and shall not we be satisfied to trust our honour in so good a hand as his?

## S E C T. V.

*Third Degree of Humility.*

**T**HE third and last degree, *Rodr.* is the humility of Saints, who  
*ch. 30* are most humble in the sight of God, when they are most esteemed and celebrated by the world.

When a person full of faults and imperfections, has a mean opinion of himself; esteems himself no better than he is; and is content to be reputed such as he esteems himself; we may commend him says St. Bernard, but have little reason to admire him. Who admires to see a poor man have a mean opinion of his riches? think himself no richer than he is: and rest content; that others think so too; but if a rich man rank himself among the

poor, and treat them with respect, as if he were the least considerable of them all; this very well deserves our admiration.

By this description of the third degree, we plainly see, that the humility of saints, and the humility of sinners, is the same in substance, though they differ in perfection. It is true, we wonder not, to see a man stand steady upon even ground. But when we see the same man stand as firm upon a lofty pinnacle, we gaze, and wonder at him. All this while the man is the same; though we admire him more, because the place is higher, and the difficulty greater. So it is in our present case. Humility is either of the judgment or the heart. The third degree is comprehended in the first and second; but however, we admire much more an humble saint; because his eminent degree of sanctity is higher, and the difficulty of his being humble, therefore seems much greater.

I say it seems greater, because I am not apt to think it so; upon second thoughts, My reason, in short, is this; humility of judgment and of heart, are chiefly grounded in the knowledge of ourselves, and love of God. The first induces us to have a mean opinion of ourselves; the more we know ourselves the more we think ourselves contemptible, the more

we judge that we deserve to be despised by all the world. The second makes us glad to be neglected, and desire to be contemned; and as the love of God encreases in our hearts, the more we hate and scorn the transitory honour of this world; the more we love to follow the example of an humble God, the more we heartily desire to be agreeable to none but him, as being every day more sensible of this great truth; he only *is approved whom God commends*, 2 Cor. x. 18.

Let us only lay these notions right together. 1. The knowledge of ourselves and love of God, is, that which makes men saints. No person ever was a saint without them; no man ever was a sinner with them; and the more this knowledge and this love encrease, the greater is the sanctity. 2. This knowledge and this love, is that which makes men humble: knowledge helps them to be humble in their judgments; love assists them to be humble in their hearts; the more they know and love, the greater is the assistance of God's grace, which is the only means of making all things easy to us. Why then may we not conclude? Whoever is a saint, the greater saint he is, the easier it is for him to be humble.

Sinners indeed, have much more matter for humility to work upon. Their



weakness, their corruption, and the misery of their deplorable condition, are incomparably worse. But, which is worst of all, they are so miserably blind, as not to know their misery. A beggar, in his drink, imagines he is a prince, and is as proud as if he were. It is true, he is miserably poor, but since he knows it not what signifies it? He is as proud as if he were the richest man alive. It is so with sinners. They are drunk with self-love, pride and vanity. They little know, and much less think, how poor, how miserable, how contemptible they are. And we may very well apply to them these words of the Apocalypse, iii. 17. 18. *Because thou sayest I am rich, and need of nothing; and knowest not, that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked: therefore I counsel thee, to anoint thy eyes that thou mayest see.* This is the general reason, why humility is harder to be found in sinners than in saints. The first have more to humble them; but the more they have, the blinder they are, and the less they know it. The second have less to humble them; but the less they have, the more their eyes are open by God's grace, and the more clearly they discover what is enough to make them fear and tremble all their life.

S E C T. VI.

*First Reason, why the greatest Saints are the most Humble.*

I Shall only add two reasons more, because all saints (I speak of such as are now living,) are comprised in these two classes; they are either such as have been sinners heretofore, or such as may be so hereafter.

The first reason is so universal, that it comprehends them both; but more particularly, those who have preserved the innocence of their baptis-

D. Sp. ch. 26. mal grace. It is gathered from that oracle of scripture, *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you to will and to do, according to his pleasure*, Phil ii. 12, 13. See the unsearchable abyss of the Almighty's judgments! where it is dangerous to dwell too long, and search too curiously, least it cast us into an excess of fear. It is enough, that none are saved, but who persevere to the end; and that the greatest saints can never be assured of their perseverance. It is a special gift which the apostle chiefly points at, when he says, Rom. ix. 18, 16. *God has mercy on whom he will have mercy. It is not of him that wills, or him that runs, but of God that shews mercy*; and again,

Ephe. ii. 8, 9. *By grace you are saved; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.* Alas! how is it possible for any saint to be assured of his condition for the future, since he is not certain even of his present state? Who can sound the bottom of our hearts? Or rather, who can sound the heart of God, and tell us, what he thinks of our condition? Who is he, that can assure us, we are good enough to be rewarded by him? Woe be to that life, how innocent soever, says St. Austin, which he judges without mercy, Psal. xix. 12. *Who is he, says David, that can understand his failings? Cleanse me from my secret faults, O Lord, Psal. cxiii. 2. and enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified; if once thou judgest him according to the utmost rigour of thy justice. Who is there that does not tremble, when he hears the just and holy man, whom God himself was pleased to praise, confess, that all his life time, God was such a terror to him, he was hardly able to endure it? Job. xxxi 23. Who can, without trembling, hear the prophet Isaiah tell us, lxiv. 6. we are all unclean; and all our righteous works like filthy rags? Or hear S. Hierom, in the life of S. Hilarion, tell us, how that blessed saint*

was terrified at the approach of death ; and to encourage his departing soul, said to himself, go forth my soul ; what art thou now afraid of ? thou hast served thy God these threescore and ten years ; and dost thou tremble now to appear before him.

Let us therefore fear and tremble in the way to heaven. Never let us fancy, we are so advanced in virtue, that we need not fear. The greatest saints were never so presumptuous, as to banish from their thoughts the fear of God, Phil. ii. 12. *They worked out their salvation with fear and trembling.* They were always full of fear, and this fear always humbled them. They were not blinded as we are with passion and humour ; but, as they improved in grace, they every day discovered more and more their secret imperfections.

The property of grace is to enlighten the understanding, as well as to enflame the heart. It makes us know our misery, and love our God, who only can deliver us. These two effects of grace were lively represented on the day of Pentecost, by that mysterious fire which rested on the heads of the Apostles. Fire gives light and heat ; and as the fire encreases, it affords more heat and greater light. So grace enlightens and enflames the minds

and hearts of saints, with knowledge of themselves, and love of God; and as their grace improves, this heat and light encreases: they discern more clearly the innumerable dangers that surround them; and become more *humble under the Almighty hand of God*, 1 Pet. v. 6.

St. Paul compares the different states of sin and grace, to light and darkness, night and day, Rom. xiii. 12, 13. *The night*, says he, *is spent, the day is at hand. Let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day.* A traveller benighted walks he knows not where. He hardly sees his hand, much less his feet. He sees perhaps, some stars shine through the clouds, whose sparkling light serves only to amuse him, and mislead him to a precipice. But when the rising sun appears, the stars immediately vanish out of sight; our traveller no longer gazes there, but has a much more useful prospect of the earth below him; where he plainly sees the ground he goes upon, the risings, the descents, the inequalities, and precipices of it. Sinners, like benighted travellers march blindly on; mind little what they do, and much less where they go. However, now and then they practise some good actions, either out of custom, or good nature; and amuse themselves with



some few semblances of virtue, whose dim lustre seems perhaps, more sparkling in the darkness of that night, which hides them even from themselves. But, it is not so with saints. Their night is spent; their day appears. The sun of justice *rises in their hearts*, 2 Pet. i. 19. Their virtues, like the stars, (which only shine in darkness,) disappear immediately. The clay which they are made of, the corruption of their nature, the enormity of sin, the power of their passions, and the weakness of their reason: these are motives of humility, which now they clearly see, and daily have before their eyes. Besides all this, they plainly see an infinite variety of artifices and disguises of self-love, which easily assumes all shapes, and counterfeits all virtues, even charity itself. And therefore they suspect the best of all their actions, trembling at the very thought of them, for fear they may be secretly corrupted by self-love. But above all, the importunity of pride, which never ceases to attack them; but continually endeavours to surprize them, (notwithstanding all these motives of humility,) is that which seems the most extravagant of all their faults, and humbles them the most.

Behold the misery of man! and what can be more miserable, if the sight of so

much misery suffices not to humble him? The greatest Saint, who is not conscious to himself, of any forfeiture of his first innocence, has no assurance of his being justified. 'He may be in the state of grace; but whether so or not, He cannot tell. And *D. Sp. ch. 37.* which is worse, although he knew it, he has no assurance of persevering one single moment. He who stands, may fall; and he who is a saint may prove a sinner. Nothing but God's grace, is able to support him to the end; and the continuance of this grace, requires so faithful and so punctual a co-operation with it, that a very small omission oftentimes suffices to deprive him of it. His perseverance is, as it were a chain of graces, linked together, and continued to the utmost period of his life; and this is more than he can merit, all that he can do is, to be always

*S. Tho. 1.* vigilant and faithful in the use  
 2. *q.* of every single grace God offers him. One grace well  
 114. *9.* used, draws on another; this a third, and that a fourth: but if he trip the least in his fidelity, the chain immediately breaks. And, this is that great diligence which the Apostle recommends to all good Christians; *use diligence*, says he, *to make your calling and election sure*, 2 Pet. i. 10. *for if you do, you shall never*

*fall.* I must confess, this saying is extremely comfortable ; if we do ; but if we do not what becomes of us ? If all our life we use such diligence, the Apostle tells us, we shall never fall ; but if we do not, what remains, but that the greatest saint amongst us, will be sure to fall ? consider this, and tremble whosoever you are ; assure yourself the more you are a saint, the more you will tremble, and the more you will see how terrible a truth this is ; which is one reason why the greatest saints (who are the most convinced of it) are always the most humble.'

### S E C T. VII.

*Second Reason why the greatest Saints are the most humble.*

**I** HAVE said enough of saints, who have preserved their innocence. The second reason only has regard to saints, who by their crimes, have lost it heretofore ; and now are truly penitent. If they who know themselves the best, are therefore the most humble, because they doubt most of their perseverance. Surely those who know most clearly the enormity of sin, which they are guilty of, have much more reason to be humble because they doubt much more of their obtaining pardon.

There is a great difference, says St. Jerome, betwixt a man whose vessel is entire, and richly laden, when he sails into the port of bliss; and him who after shipwreck, after swimming for his life, rides naked on a plank: and after having been dashed a hundred times against the rocks, at length is cast upon the sands, half dead, and almost bruised to pieces. If a man, who sails in a sound vessel, never is secure from storms which may arise, but always doubts of his arrival at the port; we may be sure his case is much more doubtful, and more terrible, who has already suffered shipwreck, and has nothing left him but a single plank, to bear him up.

It is true, it happens now and then (and it is a comfortable observation of a holy man, whose name is famous in our present age :) ‘ it happens now and then, that he, *Abbe Jean. Entritien.* 7 *whom the winds and sea obey,* Matt. viii. 27. is pleased to make them for a time, so calm and quiet, that a man who swims upon his plank with industry and courage, meets by providence another vessel, better than his own, and sails with much more comfort, much more joy, into the Heaven, than he would have done, if he had never suffered shipwreck in storm. St. John Climacus, in his 15th

*Epist. ad  
salv.*

degree, inquires, which of the two is the greater in the sight of God; he who died by sin, and rose again to life by grace? or he who never died the spiritual death of sin? and answers, that whoever thinks the innocent the more happy of the two, is much mistaken. The reason is, because all sanctity is founded in humility and charity. Whoever loves God best, and is most humble, is the greatest saint. It happens oftentimes, that *He to whom a little is forgiven loves but little*, Luke vii. 47. and it happens now and then, that he loves best, who is most mercifully pardoned, *and forgiven most*, ver. 43. We read in scripture several examples of this nature. Zachary, as soon as he had done sufficient penance for his incredulity, immediately had his speech restored him; and not only that, but he was also honoured with the gift of prophesying; which we do not read he had before. The prodigal received much greater favours and caresses from his father, than he ever had experienced before he left him. Lazarus himself, (who was the figure of great sinners) never had the honour to be entertained at table, with the Son of God, before he was by a miracle raised from the grave. S. Peter had not confidence, before he sinned, to ask



our Saviour who it was that would betray him? But when he had washed away his sins with tears, he was permitted to be more familiar with his Master, and was made the sovereign pastor of his Church. From whence, it is easy to conclude, that sinners may sometimes by penance, grow more perfect than those saints, who having kept their innocence, love God less fervently and serve him with more coldness, and indifference, Behold, says St. Ambrose, the great goodness of our God! How liberal and generous he is, to whom he pleases to be merciful! He is not contented to restore what they have lost. He grants them over and above, such graces and such favours, as they never durst have hoped for. Thus as the apostle says, Rom. v. 20. *where sin abounded, grace abounds much more*; because the more sin humbles them, the more they are exalted. When a penitent, whom sin had blinded, once begins to see, and to discover clearly the enormity of his offences, he has much more reason to be humble all his life, than if he had been always innocent. He looks upon himself, no better than a criminal reprieved, who is upon his good behaviour of his pardon; and persuades himself, that he can never give sufficient proof of his fidelity, and the sincerity of his repentance. All his

exercifes of continual penance never make him vain, but only ſerve to humble him the more, becauſe he looks upon them only as the remedies of his diſeaſes; and ſuch remedies as he muſt uſe till death: which is the only end he hopes to ſee of his diſtempers. The employment of his thoughts, is the conſideration of his grievous ſins, which he perpetually laments, wherever he goes, he never leaves the doleful memory behind him, Mich. vi. 15. *His humiliation is always in the miſt of him.* Since therefore, he who hates the proud, *gives grace to the humble,* 1 Pet. v. 5. Is it not lawful to infer, that ſinners may ſometimes arrive to a more eminent degree of ſanctity, than many of thoſe ſaints, who never fell quite down, but yet walk ſlowly in the way to heaven.

This happens, now and then, it is true: but ſuch examples are as rare as they are great. They are effects of more than ordinary grace, which God grants when and where, he pleaſes, St. Peter never would have wept ſo bitterly, if Jeſus had not mercifully *turned and looked upon him,* Luke xxii. 61, 62. Lazarus had never riſen from the grave, if Jeſus had not come himſelf, and called him forth *with a loud voice* Jo. xi. 43. The prodigal had

never come back to his father, if he had not first *come to himself*, Luke xv. 17. Alas! poor wretch! he followed swine before; and if he might *have filled his belly with their husks*, ver. 16. he would have been contented. See the blindness of a sinner! but as soon as ever *he came to himself*, Luke ver. 17. his eyes were open; and the opening of his eyes, was that which brought him to himself. He saw the great enormity of his offences, ver. 18. *I have sinned*, says he, *I have sinned against heaven*, ver. 19. *and before my father's face; I am not worthy to be called his son*. The idea of his sins was now so terrible, and made so deep impression on him, that it humbled him, not only in his judgment, but in his heart. It humbled him so much, that he not only thought himself unworthy, but desired to be received accordingly; and begged his father not to entertain him as a son, but *as one of his hired servants*.

When once the grace of God enlightens us, and by a miracle of mercy, breaks through the impenetrable darkness which our passions cloud our reason with; this light discovers clearly to us the enormity of sin; and as this light encreases, we daily discover more and more. This sight is followed with a sacred heat, that softens the obdurate coldness of our tem-

per, by which means the terrible idea of our guilt, makes every day, a deeper and more sensible impression in our hearts. And this is the second reason, why the greatest saints are the most humble; because, the greater saints they are, the more they see the great enormity of sin; the more they feel the terror of their guilt, the more they doubt of their obtaining pardon; and the more they fear and tremble all their life.

I.

*The Enormity of Sin.*

THE humble penitent whose words I lately cited, thus describes his coming to himself. Whilst I pursued, says he, the wandering errors of my heart, *Entretien 7. I drank iniquity like water*, Job. xv. 16. And not only that, but was so hardened and blind, that whatsoever I read, or heard of sin, made no impression; and instead of working my conversion, only served to render me more guilty, and more inexcusable. At length, the happy time arrived, in which it pleased the *Father of all mercies*, 1 Cor. i. 3. and *the God of all our comfort*; to bestow a favourable look upon me, and the first glance presently dispersed the darkness of my soul, the very dawning

of that light discovered to me the infernal monster, in whose company, I had so long lived unconcerned. I saw, and was immediately seized with so prodigious fear and trembling at the sight, that I am confident, as long as I have breath to live, I shall never recover it.

*Ibid.* St. Isidore of Damiette, describes this monster in surprizing terms: Some think, says he, that the devil was the father of sin: and others on the contrary maintain, that sin was the father of the devil. Be it how you please, says he, I leave you to imagine, either what a father it must be of such a son; or, what a son we may expect of such a father. This, I must confess is black enough. But all its blackness only serves to leave us in the dark. We are not yet, one jot the nigher knowing what sin is. And all that we can gather from it, is that we are never like to have it painted to the life, unless an angel undertake to draw it, and the devil sit for the picture.

The philosopher was in the right of it, when being asked the question, what God is? He took a day, then two, then three; and after all, ingeniously confessed, the more he thought of it, the more he found himself unable to express it. If a man should ask me the like question, what



a sinner is? I should not be ashamed to own, I am not able to describe the one; no more than he was to express the other.

If God be the supreme and sovereign good, if with him all things else are good, if nothing else be good without him; we may in proportion, say the reverse of sin. It is the supreme and sovereign evil. All things else are evil with it; nothing else is so to us without it.

If it be true, that all good comes from God, as from the first and universal cause of all; the reverse is true of sin, which is the first and universal root of all our evils. God made heaven; sin made hell. He made the earth; sin made it miserable. He created angels in his paradise above; sin threw them down. He created man and woman in our paradise below; and sin immediately cast them out.

Consider all the torments of the damned, the cruel pains of those eternal flames, the never ceasing anguishes of their despairing rage, &c. All this, and more than you are able to conceive, is only part of the effects of sin. It was sin prepared all this, and more than this, for them and us.

If what you only know by faith, make impression; if you are more sensible to we suffer here, than what they

suffer there : consider the revolt of all the elements, against us. Fire which once was only made to serve us, now becomes the fatal instrument, our angry God makes use of, to destroy and punish us : the very air we breathe, infects us with diseases ; and the earth we walk on, trembles, opens, buries us alive. All this had never been, if man had never sinned.

Consider all the miseries, which famine, plague, and war involve us in ; the poverty of half the world, with all the hunger, thirst, cold, sickness, and despair which follow it ; and after all the civil war of passion against reason ; which, if well examined, will be found the greatest and most painful of our miseries ; from whence proceed our ignorance and malice ; and from thence all immoralities, corruptions, and scandals, which we meet with in the world. All this had never been, if man had never sinned.

Consider all the sad disasters, you or yours have met with ; all the losses you have suffered in your family, estate or friends ; and all the crosses you have born with so much pain ; whatever you have undergone, you never had been subject to, your heart had never asked, if man had never sinned. Accursed sin ! the only first beginning, and first cause of all

our mischiefs, both in this world and the next !

My God ! If once we saw thee *as thou art*, 1 Jo. iii. 2. We could not possibly be tepid and indifferent ; the very sight of so much goodness, would, in spite of all our passions, force us to admire, adore, and love thee above all the world. Accursed sin ! if once we could but see thee as thou art, the very sight of so much malice would not suffer us to love thee any longer ; it would be impossible for either world or flesh, or devil to prevail against us ; we should hate thee above all things ; we should then abhor, detest and abominate thee evermore. Accursed sinner ! such goodness, and thou not love it ! such malice and thou not hate it !

If the eternal source of all our good be infinite in goodness, what is the first and everlasting root of all our evils ? Is it not infinite malice ? Questionless it is. Besides, God is not only infinite in goodness ; he is infinite in wisdom, infinite in justice, infinite in all perfections whatsoever. So is sin. It is not only infinite in malice ; it is also infinite in folly, infinite in all the notions we can frame of it.

The treachery, disloyalty, impiety, ingratitude, presumption, pride and in-

solence : all this, and more than all that we can think of, all is infinite.

According to the principle which I have here laid down, if any man should ask me what a sinner is ? I should not know what other name to give him. Sinner is his only name, and I can think of nothing like him, but the Man related in St. Mark, ch. v. 2. *He* is possessed with an unclean spirit, possessed with the devil ; and which is worse, possessed with sin, the father of the devil. He is so unruly in his passions, inclinations and humours, that *no man can bind him*, ver. 3. *No not chains*. The laws of God are his fetters, but these *he breaks in pieces*, ver. 4. neither is it possible for any man to tame him. If you ask his name, the gospel says, it is *legion*, ver. 9. because he is *many*, sin and sinner are two names, like that of legion : every mortal sin is many sins ; and every sinner, is as many sinners. It is impossible to number all the aggravations of a mortal sin : they are as numberless as the perfections of our offended God : and, therefore, I shall only mention those which are the most notorious, the most obvious to common sense, and such as are most odious between man and man.

A sinner ! Every sinner is in every mortal sin, not only guilty of one crime,

but of a legion of crimes ; an ungrateful villain, who betrays his benefactor ; a presumptuous slave who abuses his deliverer ; a proud servant, who despises his master ; an insolent criminal, who offends before his judge's face. All these are crimes we have a horror of, when we observe them only betwixt fellow-creatures, betwixt man and man. All these are infinitely greater betwixt man and God. And every mortal sin, includes the utmost aggravation of them all.

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*The great Ingratitude, Presumption,  
Pride and Insolence, &c.*

AN ungrateful villain. An upstart, raised from less than dust. An empty thing, extracted out of nothing. That such a thing as this, and so exalted as it is, should be so stupid, so insensible of all his obligations, so unmindful of the favours he receives, and so ill-natured to his greatest benefactor, who continually makes him all he is, who daily gives him all he has, to whom he owes the bread he eats, the air he breathes, the ground he goes upon, the hand he moves, the very life he spends in sin, and all the time allowed him to repent ! Can such a creature so obliged by such a benefactor, be so basely and so horribly ungrateful, to be-



tray him, and prefer before him the unreasonable satisfaction, of a silly humour, of a shameful passion, of a sinful inclination? Open (once for all) thy eyes blind sinner; and confess that no ingratitude, but that of Judas, can compare to thine.

A slave, (I wish he were so, to his master;) a slave to passion and humour; a slave to sin and misery; a slave condemned to worse than galleys, during life, and afterwards to the eternal flames of hell, where *neither eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor has it ever entered into the heart of any man*, 1 Cor. ii. 9. what torments God's great justice has prepared for those who dare abuse his mercy. A vile slave delivered from the mischief of all this, by God himself, descending from his glory, living here a poor and painful life, and laying down the same with every drop of his most precious blood, to pay the ransom of this wretch: that such a slave, delivered so, by such a hand, should offer to abuse the mercy which once saved him, and still holds him by a slender thread, from falling into everlasting misery!

A servant, I should have said a miserable insect, full of sinful putrefaction, a vile spawn of man's original corruption, a worm, whose very crawling on its fellow dust, is more preferment than it can

deserve. That such a thing as this, should be so proud as to despise the master of the world ! So great, so wise, so infinitely perfect, and so every way deserving as he is ! This vermin has indeed a soul ; an angel once by grace, but now by sin, a devil, black as hell itself ; a Lucifer that will be *knowing good and evil*, Gen. iii. 5. will be *like the highest*, Isa. xiv. 14. will pretend to govern in his master's house, despise his orders, slight his menaces, neglect his admonitions. *Be astonished, O ye heavens at this*, Jer. ii. 12.

A most insolent criminal ; a criminal so insolent, as to offend before God's face ; in presence of his General, his King, his Father, his Deliverer, his Benefactor, and his Master ; and besides all this, in presence of his Judge, before the very bar where he continually is up on his trial for his everlasting life or death. Our Saviour says, Joh. iii. 18. *That whosoever believes not is condemned already.* We may say the same of every sinner : in the very moment he offends, he is condemned already. His all-seeing Judge is always witness of his thoughts, words, actions and desires ; and he no sooner is a criminal, but he is tried and judged.

This insolence of his, in some respect extends all other aggravations of his crime

It is an extravagance of which we hardly find the least example between man and man. We often hear of soldiers that desert: but whensoever they go they steal away: we never hear, that they acquaint their general with such designs. We often hear of subjects that conspire against the government; but never hear them talk such matters loudly, in the hearing of their prince. We often hear of murders, robberies, and many other outrages, committed in the world; but when the prisoner once was brought to trial, did you ever hear, he either robbed or murdered at the bar? No, no, such insolence was never heard of between man and man. And, yet this very insolence is infinitely less than ours, which we are always guilty of in every mortal sin.

I say no more. I tremble at the very thought of having said so much, when I reflect, how all that we can either say or think, will never convert us without grace. There is nothing but the grace of God can make a deep impression of it in our hearts.

## III.

*Our Saviour's Idea of sin, and the impression it made upon him.*

**O**UR Saviour Jesus Christ, best knew the great enormity of sin; and we may

judge how great it is, by the impression it made upon him; when the approaching hour of his passion, laid before his eyes, the terrible idea of it.

It was the first bloody scene of all his sufferings. *He began to be sorrowful and very heavy.* Matt. xxvi. 37. A deluge of grief broke in upon his soul, quite overwhelmed his heart, and lay so heavy upon his fearful thoughts, he was not able to conceal it any longer, and support the pressing weight of his affliction, all alone in silence. His three most dear and most familiar disciples, were surprised so much to see this sudden alteration, in their dearest Lord; they were not able to enquire the cause, but like Job's three friends, they stood astonished, and speak not one word to him, *because they saw his grief was very great,* Job. ii. 13.

Our Saviour could hold no longer, but broke out into this doleful expression, Matt. xxvi. 38. *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* Ah! my dear disciples! if you knew, as well as I do all the motives of my grief, you would not wonder, that the very thought of them makes me look pale, and shews you the face of death in my countenance. The violent pangs of my afflicted soul are so sharp and piercing, that, did not my divinity support me, and preserve

my life, I should immediately, this very moment, die upon this place, Matt. xxvi. 38. *Stay a while, and watch with me.* You, who love me best, who have been always most familiar with me, be not now so unkind, as to leave me in this sad condition all alone: *Stay a while and watch with me*, till my storm of grief blow over.

Dear Christians! let us stay a while, and with these three disciples, not only admire, but search into the cause of this great alteration, in the soul of our Redeemer. How was it possible, that now he should begin to fear so much that death which all his life he so much desired? His love for man, and his desire of dying for us, were conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost; they came into the world with him, and ever after so employed his thoughts, he scarce could talk of any thing else. Among his disciples, his common discourse was of his sufferings, the cup he was to drink, his obligation, his readiness, his earnestness to fulfil the prophecies, Luke xii. 50. *I have, says he, a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened, till it be accomplished?* When the time drew nearer, he redoubled his desires of dying for us, Luke xxii. 15. *With desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you?* And



why, ' says St. Chrysostom, because it is a preparation to my passion, which I have so long, so earnestly desired.' He knew from the beginning, every torment every degree of it: often reflected on each circumstance apart, and as often took delight in viewing all of them together. Upon mount Thabor, when the glory of his blessed soul shined through his body, like the sun through a transparent cloud, upon the dazzled eyes of his disciples, giving them a glimpse of the eternal glory we expect hereafter: our Saviour seemed as much delighted with the prospect of his passion, as with all the joys of heaven: and as upon other occasions, when *his disciples prayed him to eat*, John iv. 31. 34. he told them, *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and finish his work*; so when they desired him to stay and *make tabernacles*, Luke ix. 30, 33. it was his joy and delight, to *talk with Moses and Elias of his dycease*, his passion which he should accomplish, at Hierusalem, ver. 31.

Ah Christians! you have reason to admire and wonder, that the *God of all your comfort*, 2 Cor. i. 3. is now heavy and disconsolate: but you will fear and tremble, more than wonder, if you seriously reflect, that all his grief proceeded chiefly from the terrible idea he had of sin; not

his, but ours. St. Hierom says, his greatest grief proceeded not *Apud D.* from fear of suffering, *be-*  
*Tho. in Cat.* cause he came to suffer; but he chiefly grieved for Judas, for the scandle of the apostles, and the reprobation of the people, &c.

This agrees exactly with our Saviour's words, Luke xxiii. 27, 28. to those who followed him to Calvary; when turning *to the women who lamented him*, he said, *daughters of Hierusalem, weep not for me only, weep also for yourselves, and for your children.* Weep not for me, my torments will be short; weep for yourselves; your torment (if you do not weep, repent, and mend,) will be eternal. Alas! the torments which I willingly and freely suffer for your sake, are nothing to the pains of hell, which you for ever will endure, unless by penitential tears, mixed with my blood, you wash away your sins, ver. 31. *If they do thus in the green wood, what will they do in the dry?* If I, tho' innocent, suffer thus for your sins, you who are guilty, what are you like to suffer for your own? If I, who am true God, the only beloved Son of my eternal Father, who never once offended him; if because, I interpose betwixt you and his justice, I am thus severely treated; what will become of miserable creatures,

grievous sinners, who so often have offended him, if they do not join their tears with mine: if they are not afflicted with me for their sins, for which I die upon the cross? *Every soul who upon this day is not afflicted, shall perish*, Lev. **xxiii.** 29. Every soul who thinks upon this day, and is not afflicted with his dying Saviour, is not heartily afflicted for those sins for which he dies, shall certainly perish.

Neither does it contradict what is commonly said, that one great difference between our Saviour and his martyrs was, that by a miracle of grace, he gave them that undaunted courage, which by a greater miracle he now refused to himself. It is true, he freely suffered in himself the natural fear of death; to shew himself true man as well as God; to let us see at once, the weakness of our nature, and the power of grace; and comfort us by making it appear, that such infirmities of nature are not sins, as long as reason governs them, and resignation to submit to the will of God. But yet, there is another very great difference between his case and theirs. Martyrs who die for God's sake are secure of their success; they are sure not to suffer in vain, they are certain to possess all they desire, and to enjoy eternally their God, to whom

they sacrifice their lives. This is the reason, why our martyrs look death boldly in the face; with open arms receive it, and go to meet it with the same assurance as if they went to heaven.

*Anima de* Let the body suffer all the  
*Deo suo sem-* worst of pains, the soul is  
*per secura St.* unconcerned, the soul is se-  
*Cypr.* cure of God, the soul is in  
 heaven beforehand. When man dies to  
 enjoy God, he is sure he shall enjoy  
 him. But (alas!) it is not so when,  
 when Jesus dies for man. He dies to en-  
 joy him in heaven, and foresees he will  
 be damned to all eternity. The lively  
 apprehension of his torments altogether,  
 was enough to make him sorrowful, even  
 to death; but however, if he could have  
 promised the eternal salvation of all those  
 dear-bought souls for which he died; the  
 joyful assurance of so happy a success,  
 would have eased the burden of his grief;  
 his torments, all of them would have  
 been welcome upon that condition. But  
 to sweat blood in vain, to be scourged to  
 no purpose, to spend the last drop of his  
 sacred veins to no effect, was an affliction  
 not to be supported; without praying his  
 eternal Father to have pity and compas-  
 sion on him: *Father, if it be possible;*  
*Matt. xxvi. 30.* dispense at least with this

part of my sentence, let me die, but do not let me die in vain.

It is said of Joseph, in the book of Genesis, ch. xlv. 15 *He kissed all his brethren, and wept over every one of them.* I may say the same of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane: he grieved for all his brethren, and wept over every one of them in particular. He saw before his eyes the sins of every person in the world; the grace which he would from time to time bestow upon us, the neglect of all his offers, and abuse of all his favours. He foresaw every temptation which we yield to, and grieved to see it. He foresaw each profanation of the sacrament, which we frequent unworthily, and fainted with grief, when he thought how often his most precious blood would by our fault, become the poison of our souls. He foresaw, in the whole course of our lives, where, when, and how, we would resist, and render ineffectual, all the directions, admonitions, and exhortations of his ministers, and fell into a bloody sweat at the very thought of our ingratitude, by which the chief means of attaining everlasting happiness serve only, in the end, to justify our sentence of eternal misery, Isa. xxxv. 4, 6. *He bore our griefs, he carried our sorrows, he took upon him the iniquities of us all; and eve-*



ry one of our most grievous sins, appeared to him in a more hideous shape, than ever it appeared to any creature.

Mortal sin is against the goodness of God ; It separates us from our God, and leaves our souls empty of God's grace. So that, as God is infinitely good, the malice of a mortal sin is infinitely evil. As none of us can understand the infinite goodness of the one, so none of us are able to conceive the infinite malice of the other. Christ our Lord, being God and Man, comprehended in the beatific vision of God's essence, the goodness of God, and his hatred of all mortal sin. The the impression this idea made upon him was the chief, if not the only reason, why our Saviour could not hold from telling his disciples, Matt. xvi. 38. *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* His soul was overwhelmed with such a deluge of affliction, that his grief, not being able to contain itself within the bounds of nature, violently forced itself through all his pores, in tears of blood.

Ah, my dear Jesus ! when shall I be able, to make such a perfect act of true contrition for my sins, as thou hast made for mine ? when shall I be able to say, *my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto*

*death!* when shall I lament my grievous sins in tears of blood! Jer. ix. i. *Give me, at least, water to my head, and fountains to my eyes.* No contrite heart, but thine, bleeds otherways than at the eyes; and it is I hope enough for me, if I can be so sorry for my sins, as to lament them all the days I have to live, and rather die than ever sin again.

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## IV.

*The Saints Idea of Sin. How much it humbles them.*

THERE is nothing but the grace of Jesus Christ, can make us saints. There is nothing else can make us clearly see, and heartily detest the malice of our sins. The greater share we have of this great grace, the more we see sin and detest it; so much more we fear and tremble at the very thought of it; and as our grace encreases, we grow every day more humble by remembering it.

To make this out, I need not write the lives of all the saints. A pattern is enough to judge of all the piece, especially such a one at St. John *Deg. 5.* Climacus, an ancient father of

- Ar.* 20. the Church, has left behind him. He assures us, his relation is no fable. He affirms, that what he says, he saw with his own eyes; and that he was a whole month in their company.
- Ar.* 27.

• Draw near, says he, all ye who have provoked the wrath of God by your offences; come and hear the wonders he was pleased to let me see for my edification; be attentive to my words, all you who have a mind to reconcile yourselves to God, by a sincere conversion.

When I was, says he, in the Monastery of Penitents, I saw men so extreamly humbled with the grievous weight of their offences, that the cries and prayers to God, would even move the stones themselves. With heads bowed down, and eyes upon the ground, I heard them say, we confess, O Lord, we confess, that we deserve to suffer all chastisements, and afflictions; because our sins are such, that should we summon all the universe to weep for us, the tears of the world would never make sufficient satisfaction. There remains one only thing we ask, one only thing we pray for, Psal. vi. i. *that thou never mayest correct us in thy anger, nor chastise us in thy great displeasure; but a little spare us through thy infinite mercy.*

It is enough, O Lord, that thou deliver us from those inexplicable torments hidden in the centre of the earth. We dare not ask a full and perfect pardon: we, who have not kept the holy laws of our profession, but have broken them again, when thou hadst given us the most endearing marks of love and mercy in forgiving of our sins.

Whoever saw them laugh? whoever heard among them any idle talk? whoever could observe, that any passion transported them? or any anger moved them? Alas! they hardly knew what anger was; their great affliction and continual grief, had now extinguished in them all emotions of resentment. There was never known the least appearance of dispute; the least lashing out in discourse; the least sign of vain glory. There was no jollity of feasting, no concern for the body, no love of ease and pleasure, no thought of wine, no use of fruits, no care for delicacies pleasing to the palate. The desire of all such things was quite extinct. And after all, there was not to be found the least censoriousness, or least appearance of an inclination, to judge their neighbours.

Some of them, now and then, would knock their breasts; and, as if they were

already at the gate of heaven, open us, said they, O judge of mankind, open us the gate of happiness, which we have shut by sin. Others would say, Luke i. 79. *Give light to us, O Lord, who sit in darkness, in the shades of death, and guide our steps into the way of peace.* Others again; will the Almighty look upon us any more? Is it possible to pay our debts, and satisfy for our offences? Will our God, once more afford us any comfort? We are laid in chains of sin, and one day, shall we hear him say, come forth?

They always had their hour of death before their eyes; and sometimes they would say to one another; what will then become of us; what sentence will our God pronounce upon us? what will be our end? Shall we then be called home from banishment, to which we have been hitherto condemned for our offences? Shall such criminals as we, find any favour then? Such sinners as we are, such miserable wretches, covered with confusion and darkness. Have our prayers mounted to the throne of God? Or, have they been rejected, as they well deserve? If well received, how far have they prevailed? Have they obtained a full discharge, or only part? Alas! they could not have



much force, proceeding from such mouths, so sinful, so impure, as ours.

At other times, they thus discoursed their fears and doubts: what think you brethren? do you think that we advance? do you think that we obtain the effect of our demands? do you think, that God will once again receive us? Do you think he will open us the gates of heaven? Who can tell, (says the Ninivites,) who knows; but God may change the sentence which he has pronounced against us? Though perhaps, he will not free us from the rigorous chastisements which we have deserved. However, let us labour all we can, and do whatever we are able. If he open us the gate of heaven, we are happy; if he does not, he is just: and therefore, never let us cease to bless him. Doubtful, as we are, of what may be our sentence, we must continue all our life, still knocking at the door. Perhaps our importunity, our constancy, and our perseverance, may find admittance in the end.

Behold the language of the saints! consider, how their fear and trembling humbles them, in presence of their angry God. Consider the idea which they have of sin; how different it is from what we generally have. Consider the impression which it makes upon them, and compare it with our stupidity, our hardness, our insensi-

bility. Conclude with shame and sorrow, that this difference, betwixt them and us, proceeds not from their having been much greater sinners than we are, but from our being much less saints, than they.

When any of those penitents drew nigh the hour of death, how terrible, how lamentable was the spectacle! These blessed criminals, when any one of their companions was upon the point of leaving them, they all surrounded him with aking hearts, and weeping eyes, to ask him how do you find yourself, dear brother, dear companion in our miseries and sufferings? what say you now? what do you hope? what do you think? have you obtained what have you laboured for with so much pain? or, is your labour lost? are you arrived at the port? or, are you not? have you a full assurance of your happiness? or, have you only an uncertain hope? do you find yourself in perfect liberty of mind? or, are you yet in trouble and anxiety? have you heard already, in the secret of your soul, a voice, which tells you, *Mat. ix. 2. your sins are forgiven you?* or, do you seem to hear that formidable sentence, *Psal. ix. 17. The wicked shall be turned into hell?* What say you, brother? tell us, we conjure you, tell us, now sincerely; that by knowing what condition you are in at present,

we may guess, what state we may be in one day, ourselves.

To these demands, some of these dying penitents made answer, Psalm lxvi. 20. *Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.* Others, in a doleful tone, replied, Psal. cxxiv. 4. *Can our soul go over the stream of water, which are like to overwhelm us?* This they said, not being yet assured of their salvation; but considering with fear and trembling, what might happen to them in the terrible account which now was nigh at hand. And others answered, more uncomfortable; woe be to the soul that hath not kept inviolably all the laws of its profession. See, the hour is come, the only hour in which we shall begin to know our state for all eternity.

These blessed penitents, for one relapse, did penance, the severest they were able to invent: and we, for numberless relapses, many of them worse than theirs, do none at all. These penitents persevered in the same austerities till death, their penance had no end: we still persevere in our sins, our penance never begins. Their fear and trembling, their profound humility, went hand in hand with all their penance and perseverance: our confidence and unconcernedness, our extravagant presumption, always keep an equal peace with

our tepidity and slothfulness. Dear Christians, give me leave to ask, why all this difference betwixt them and us? a thousand years, betwixt their age, and this which now we live in, have they altered the Almighty? has he less authority to punish us? or we less obligation to obey him, honour him, and make him satisfaction, if we do not? is our God less just, because we more abuse his mercy? or more merciful, because we less regard his justice? Alas! our blindness is the only reason: we are blinder than they were; and therefore we are more secure, more unconcerned more proud, more tepid, and more slothful.

*Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me,* Luke xviii. 38. Thou blessed Saviour of the world, *who enlightenest every man that comes into it,* John i. 9. open once my eyes, and keep them ever open, that I may continually see and love thy goodness, wisdom, mercy, justice; and by the assistance of so great a grace, perpetually see and hate the malice of my sins. There is nothing but thy grace that can enlighten every man that comes into the world: There is nothing else can clear my understanding and inflame my heart: there is nothing else can make me truly contrite, truly humble. *Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me a sinner,* Luke xviii. 38. who

am not in the way, nor going on but *sitting by the way-side*, ver. 35. *begging* thy assistance. Here I sit and wait thy passing by: my blindness hinders me from doing any more: and even when I *hear thee pass*, ver. 36. I know not how to follow thee. The croud of all my passions, inclinations and humours, and the multitude of my engagements, cares and troubles, make a noise about me; such a one I fear as will not let thee hear me. When I offer to cry out for help, they try to stop my mouth, and bid me *hold my peace*, ver. 39. And therefore I cry out *the more, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me*, ver. 39. Thou needest not *stand to ask* me what I want, or *what I will that thou shouldest do unto me*, ver. 41. Thou who knowest my wants so infinitely better than myself. The only favour which I humbly beg, is, *that I may receive my sight*, ver. 41. Say only to my soul, as once thou saidest to that blind man, who was a figure of me; say, *Receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee*, ver. 42. say but this, (thy words are powerful, and make themselves prove true.) Say only this and then *immediately* I shall *receive my sight and follow thee*, ver. 43. I then shall follow thy example, I shall follow thy disciples, and thy saints. I then shall do fit penance for my sins, and shall persevere



in it to the end. I then shall study how to punish every passion, inclination and humour, which indued me to offend thee. I shall then be truly contrite, truly humble; I shall glorify thee all my life, ver. 45. and all the people when they see the happy change, shall give the praise to God. Amen.

THE CHARACTER OF  
A GOOD CHRISTIAN.

SECT. I.

*The Perfection of his Duty.*

D. Sp. p. **W**HOEVER seriously professes the religion of Christ, and takes the Gospel for the rule of that divine religion, making it his business to acquire that sanctity which Jesus Christ demands of his disciples, is a Christian. The Gospel was not only writ for those we call religious. We are, all of us, religious persons; of the best and first of all religions, which is that of Jesus Christ. We have a rule, a habit, and a founder; we have vows and exercises. Christ first instituted and established our religion: he is the founder of our order. Innocence and sanctity make up the habit we receive in baptism. Our promises of renouncing all the pomps and works of Satan, are our vows. The Gospel is our

rule; our prayers, penances, and generally all good actions, are our exercises.

Do you think, the Gospel was not written, sa's St. Basil, every *Ibid.* jot as much for married persons, as for monks? undoubtedly it is by this rule that both are to be judged. It is well if married people can obtain God's pardon for the faults committed in that state. In all things else, they are as much obliged to live like saints, as the religious are. The ties of marriage, and engagements of the world, will never justify an idle life; or any way dispense with the laborious task of living like a Christian. It is lawful to live in the world; but not, to live according to the maxims of it. On the contrary, the more we are exposed to the temptations of the devil, so much more we are obliged to use our utmost care and vigilance. Believe not, says St. Chrysostom, that God expects from worldly men, a sanctity quite different from *Ibid.* that of monks. It is true, indeed, that those may marry, and these may not: but in all things else the case is equal. They have both received the same laws, and both are subject to the same punishments. When Jesus laid his curse upon the rich, and those who lead a jolly life in sensuality and pleasure, when he spoke of the evangelical beatitudes; he spoke not only

to religious, but to all the faithful, and without the least exception. He was never heard to say, that the religious man shall suffer for his sins; but not the secular. The difference we fancy in this point, is only an invention of men; it is not grounded in the word of God, who equally obliges all that will be saved, to keep his laws. St. Paul addressing his discourse to married persons, does not he require of them as great a share of sanctity, as we can find in the most perfect monks? What disengagement he prescribes to all of us! what moderation in our clothes, our diet, and our use of riches! 1 Tim. 68. *Having food, says he, and raiment, let us be contented,* 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. *They who are married, let them be as if they were not; and those who use the world, as if they used it not;* What more can we expect from those we call religious? Let us therefore never say, that worldly men are either not obliged, or else not able to observe the rules of christianity; and that religious only can attain to such sublime perfection. There is nothing so pernicious as this false opinion. It maintains the greatest part of libertines in their disorders, and encourages imperfect souls to lead a loose and lazy life. Assure yourselves, our God requires of all, one self-same sanctity,

The means of our arriving to it, may be different; but yet religious persons have no other aim than we have. They design to save themselves by the narrow way; and we shall never be saved by walking in the broad one.

Hence it follows clearly, that the gospel being preached and made *Ibid.* for all, we all are bound to follow it; we all must labour to acquire the sanctity demanded by it; we must all be thoroughly persuaded, that it is the only way which leads to heaven, and that every other way is sure to end in everlasting death. It is true the methods and exercises which are used, and followed in religious houses, to arrive to such perfection, are quite different from what are usually prescribed to worldly persons: but their virtues always are the same although their exercises are not. These two things we commonly confound; to wit, the exercises and virtues of a Christian. We imagine, for example, that a modest and a homely dress, is only fit for Cloisters, where they always wear a certain habit, poor and plain. We fancy that the recollection which is practised in religious houses, is a thing peculiar to their character; because we find, that they only have certain hours allotted them for keeping silence. We imagine also, that a penitential life belongs

to none but them; because they fast? and practise several austerities commanded by superiors. It is a great mistake: these virtues all are evangelical: we find them in the gospel, which is ours as much as theirs: they are prescribed to all men, by the common rule of Christianity: and tho' we have not (as religious have) so great advantages to make the practice of them uniform and easy; nevertheless, we all are indispensibly obliged to have them, and to practise them. Our modesty, our moderation must *be known to all*, Phil. iv. as well as theirs. Our recollection of mind must be preserved, amidst the multitude of our employments. We are equally obliged to mortify and circumcise our hear' and to extinguish in it, all our sensual desires, the precept of *continual prayer*, Thes. v. 17. is as much for us as them. We are not bound to sing in choir, at certain hours, as they do; but our heart must be, as much as theirs, continually united to our God, by loving of him above all things. Though we have not made a vow of poverty, yet we must be, as well as they entirely disengaged from all the riches of the earth, and never set our hearts upon them whilst we use them. Though we have not vowed obedience, we are all obliged, as much as they, to be attentive to the precepts of our founder, *Jesus*.



*Christ*, and punctually observe the least of his *Commandments*, Matt. v. 19.

Behold the duty of a Christian! See how generous, how noble, how heroical his resolution is, of making good the full signification of his name! he meets with an infinity of obstacles; but notwithstanding all, he is resolved to sacrifice and save himself: he is resolved to use all violence, whatever may be requisite, to make his way to heaven, and to *take it even by force*, Matt. xi. 12.

## S E C T. II.

*His contempt of the World.*

**H**E always looks upon *S. Chrysostom.* himself, as a meer *Hom. 24. in* stranger in this world; and *Ep. and Hebr.* the continual remembrance of his being so, is the foundation and root of all his virtue. He takes little pleasure, in employing of his busy thoughts about this life, and the affairs relating to it; but is like a banished man, who lives uneasy in a foreign country, always looking homeward with extreme impatience, to see the blessed place which gave him birth; and always doing all he can, to lay all things in readiness for his return. He never is dejected with adversity, nor puffed up with prosperity, which happen to attend his fortune here; but passes unconcernedly by, without regarding either; and without the least stop in his way, pur-

sues his journey, like a traveller, who longs to be at home, and thinks of nothing else, but how to make haste thither. And this is the reason why our God obliges him to say, in his daily prayer, *Thy kingdom come*; that he may always have before his eyes, the happy day which is to be the last, and generously scorn to value any transitory honour, profit, pleasure, which he meets with upon earth.

A Christian, by those *S. Chrysostom.* noble sentiments of true *hom. 15. ad po-* and solid wisdom, mounts *pul. Antiochem* to such a height above the reach of all this world, that he is hardly capable of feeling, much less of admiring, whatsoever passes in it. He is like a man, who from the top of an aspiring mountain, takes a view of all below him, and can hardly see the towns and cities, which appear like mole-hills; where the numerous inhabitants, like swarms of ants, run up and down, and follow eagerly their little trade of hoarding up a petty treasure which is nothing to his purpose. All his treasure and his heart, are both in heaven. There his loving eye is generally fixed; and if he now and then look down upon the riches, glory, power, honour of this miserable world, they all seem trifling matters; all such things are little, inconsiderable, and contemptible to him.

And yet he cannot justly be accused of pride, because *S. Chrysoft* he thinks, the wisest politi- *Ham. 11.* cians, are but fools, their *Epist. 1 Cor.* riches, shadows; and all their pleasures, dreams; and their titles, dignities, and honours, only childrens baubles. No, it cannot justly be accounted pride. It is certainly the greatest wisdom, to submit our judgments, and conform them, to the external truth of God himself; and judge of things, as they are truly in themselves. Or otherwise we must allow, that Solomon himself, was guilty of presumption and arrogance; when after a full trial, after long and sad experience, he pronounced, that all the world is 'Vanity of vanities, and nothing else but vanity.'

He labours all he can to make his soul become a *S. Chrysoft-* heaven upon earth; and *om. Hom. 16.* fails not to succeed in such *in. Epist. ad* a noble enterprise. The *Heb.* heaven, which we see, and so admire, is but an emblem of his happiness. As heaven is enlightened by the rising sun, his soul is more enlightened by the grace of God, the sun of justice, which arises without setting, in his heart, As heaven always is the same; still beautiful and bright within itself, although the midnight darkness seem to alter and

obscure it; so his soul is still the same; it is always easy and content within itself, although he lives obscurely in disgrace or poverty, and seem a miserable man to those who little understand the secret of his happiness. As heaven is so high above the winds and storms that the most violent disturbance of the air can never reach it; so the soul of a good christian, even when the world combines to make him suffer most, receives no harm at all. His treasure is in heaven, and his heart is with it. He is above the reach of all that they can do. His heart is raised to such a height, that when he takes a prospect of the earth below, he sees no difference betwixt the mean and the noble. Neither are the poor the objects that seem little in his sight? but kings themselves, and generals of armies, politicians, usurers, and what you please, seem every jot as little and contemptible as they. The difference of poor and rich makes no impression upon him; no more than when he sees amongst a swarm of little ants, some creep loaded, and others empty.

What can men do to such a man as this, suppose they have a mind to make him miserable? Will they  
*S. Chrysostom.* rob him of his money? all  
*Hom. 5. ad po.* his riches are in heaven.  
*pul. Anito.* Will they banish him from home? he has no other

home but heaven; and it is not in their power to banish him from thence. Will they lay him fast in chains; his conscience will still be free: and, for his part, he fears no other chains but those of sin, or will they kill him? when they have done this, they have no more to do? and even then, his soul will live for ever, his body one day rise again.

A man who lives not but for Jesus Christ, is quite above the reach of all misfortunes that can threaten him; provided that he will not freely and deliberately hurt himself, no man alive can have the least advantage over him. *S. Chryso- stom. lib. 2. ad. Theod. lap- sum, c. 3.*

He is invincible at all arms. The loss of his goods is no affliction to him, because he well considers, that we all bring nothing with us at our birth; and we shall carry nothing with us at our death. The vain desires of reputation and honour cannot seize his heart; because he knows that all our conversation ought to be in heaven. All the injuries and outrages he meets with, are not able to provoke him; he is a christian: and, being truly such, he fears but one great danger of one only loss; the danger of offending God, and losing of his favour: all things else, as banishment and poverty, with all the greatest and most dangerous extremities, he values not at



all: and even death itself which others think so terrible, is always most agreeable most comfortable, and most welcome, whensoever it comes.

### S E C T. III.

#### *His Desire of Heaven.*

**T**HE Scripture generally represents a christian, as a person disengaged and separated from the world. *If you were of the world,* says our Saviour. Jo. xv. 19. *the world would love his own; but because you are not of the world and I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you,* 1 Jo. ii. 15. *He loves not the world, nor the things that are in the world, because, if any man love the world, the love of God is not in him,* Rom. xii. 2. *He is not conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of his mind, that he may prove what is the good the acceptable and perfect will of God,* 1 Cor. vii. 31. *He uses the world, as if he used it not,* Gal. vi. 14. *The world is crucified to him, and he is to the world,* Colos. iii. 3. *He is dead, and his life is hid with Christ in God.* Jam. 27. *His religion pure and undefiled, is that by which he keeps himself unspotted from the world,* 1 Pet. ii. 11. *He abstains from all desires which war against the soul, because he is a stranger and a pilgrim in the world.*

But that which most inclines him to desire the happiness of heaven, is his *knowing*, that as long as he is here, *he is absent* from his God, 2 Cor. v. 6.

No wonder he so much desires to be in heaven: all *D. Sp. Par.* his comfort is his hope of being there. 2. *Cha. 21.* The gate so strait; the way so narrow; the continual violence so necessary to be used: the cross he daily bears; the *self-denial* which he always practises, Luke xiii. 3. The *penance*, without which *we all shall perish*, if we do not mortify our passions, curb our humours, and resist our inclinations: all this put together, is enough to make a christian life, so painful troublesome, and disagreeable; that, 1 Cor. xv. 19. *If in this life only he had hope, he would of all men be most miserable.*

It is no wonder therefore he so much desires the sight of God, *Ibid.* which only can deliver him from all the miseries he labours under, ch. 22. It is the great affliction of the just; to see themselves so far from Sion, separated from their God, and banished from their heavenly Jerusalem. Although the riches of the world were all their own, they still would think themselves unfortunate, because their treasure is not here; it is only to be found hereafter. They as earnestly desire the happiness of heaven,

as a hart long hunted thirsts for water. It is a duty indispensibly incumbent upon all true christians, to desire it above all things.

Hear St. Austin, he who finds  
*Ibid.* himself at ease on earth ; who  
*ch. 21.* is contented to live always here ;  
 and finds the greatest joy and satisfaction in this world, will never enter heaven. If you ask the reason, he replies : because he has not in his heart the love of God, whoever does not sigh and above all things wish, for the enjoyment of eternal life. Examine well your heart. If God should promise you a long life upon earth, and tell you, you shall here enjoy whatever you can wish for ; riches, pleasures, honours, health, prosperity, and what you please beside, shall every where attend you only ; you shall never see me ; you shall never have a share with me in heaven ; would you be content ? Whoever is in such a disposition, does not begin to love him above all things.

*Ibid.* Hear the royal prophet :  
*ch. 22.* hear the language of his love.  
 As the Heart pants after water,  
 so my soul pants after thee my God, Psal.  
 xlii. 1, 2, 3, *My soul is thirsty for thee,*  
 O thou living God, the only life and comfort of my soul. My tears have been my entertainment day and night ; and it is the only ease of my impatient grief,

to have the liberty of weeping in thy absence. When shall I appear before my God? when once that happy day approaches, when I once *behold thy face I shall be satisfied*, Psal. xvii. 15. but never shall be satisfied till then. It is this, and only this one thing, I always have desired of thee, that I may dwell in thy house for ever, *and behold thy beauty*, Psal. xxvii. 4. *Ibid.*

All God's children say the same; they daily pray to their eternal Father, that his kingdom come; and their desire of everlasting life; though sometimes out of mind, is always in their heart. By this they pray incessantly. By this they are attentive to God's presence, in the midst of those employments and affairs, which otherwise would easily divert them from, the thoughts of him. By this they frequently recall their wandering thoughts, renew their decaying fervour, inflame their cooling love, encourage their desponding hearts, and march a great deal faster towards heaven. When the scripture commands us, says St. Austin, to pray always; we are not therefore obliged to be always on our knees, or always singing psalms in choir: we only are obliged to have continually, in the bottom of our hearts a true desire to leave this earth, and enter into heaven. This continual desire must still per-

severe in our heart. We always much lament and sigh and say, I am a captive and a pilgrim, I am far from home, I am not with my God. It is true, (St. Austin adds), a just man may divert himself sometimes, and spend some hours in such employments, as appear quite different from gaining heaven. It is, alas! the servitude of his captivity, which thus obliges him to work for them Egyptians, whilst he is a slave to Pharaoh. But however, in the midst of all his slavery, he never can forget the land of Promise; he laments, he sighs, he always wishes to be there: and thus he always prays to God that he will please to grant him the possession of that sovereign good, which only can suffice to make him truly and for ever happy.

F I N I S.

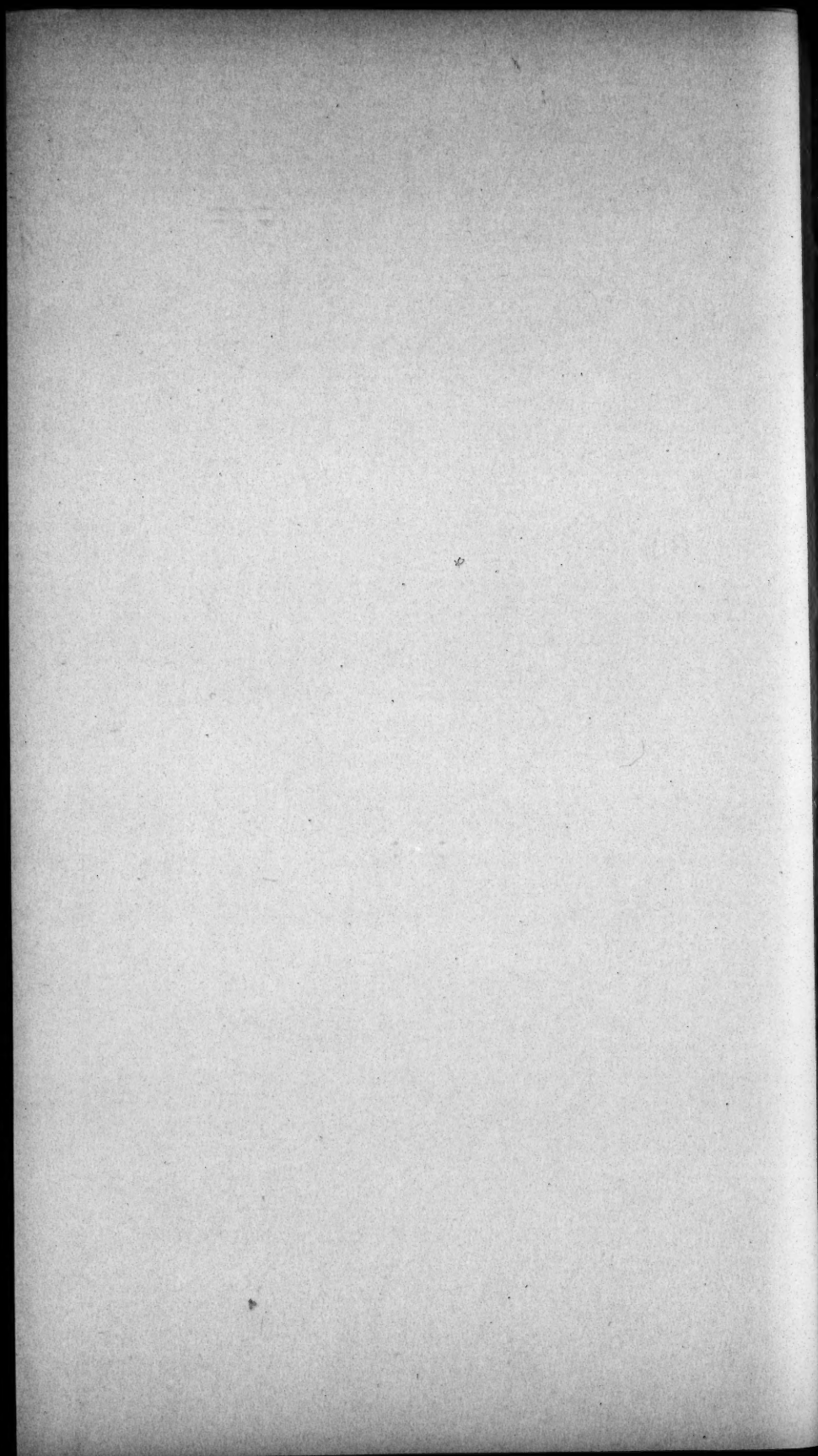
**V**ISA Approbatione Eximii ac Perillustriſſis Domini, \*\*\* Presbyteri. S. Theologiæ Doctoris, \*\*\* approbo ego Librum Anglicano Idiomatico compositum, cui titulus est, *A Contrite and Humble Heart, with Motives and Considerations to prepare it.* D. D. 16 Martii. 1693.



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Harris

Francisca Octavia Harris

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